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VOL. IX.

Containing the Book of Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Ezekiel.

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THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH.

Introduction.

I. Title. So called from the name of the—II. Author. Jeremiah, the S. of Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth (i. 6) in Benj., called to proph. office 70 yrs. aft. d. of Isa., in 13th yr. of K. Josiah (i. 1). Some yrs. aft., Jer. came to Jerus., visited cities of Judah, prophesying above 40 years (ii. 6). Jehoiakim spurned his predictions, cut the roll in pieces, and burned it. Jer. rewrote it with additions (xxxvi.). Falsely accused, in the reign of Zedekiah, of deserting to Chaldæans, he was imprisoned. By order of Nebuchadnezzar he had the choice of going to Babylon, but preferred to remain with his own people. They, disobeying his message, went to Egypt, taking him and Baruch with them (xliii. 6), there he still sought to turn the people (xliv.), but we have no further acc. of him. Trad. says the Jews put him to death at Taphanhes (*Jerome*). Jer. was contemp. with Zeph., Hab., Eze., and Dan. "The hist. of Jer. brings before us a man forced, as it were, in spite of himself, from obscurity and retirement into the publicity and peril which attended the prophetical office. Naturally mild, susceptible, and inclined rather to mourn in secret for the iniquity which surrounded him than to brave and denounce the wrong-doers, he stood forth at the call of God and proved himself a faithful, fearless champion of the truth, amidst reproaches, insults, and threats. This combination of qualities is so marked, that Havernick regards it as a proof of the Divine origin of his mission. In Eze., on the other hand, we see the power of Divine inspiration acting on a mind naturally of the firmest texture, and absorbing all the powers of the soul" (*Angus*). III. Time. B.C. 628—585. "The style of Jer. corresponds with the character of his mind; it is peculiarly marked by pathos. He delights in expressions of tenderness, and gives touching descriptions of the miseries of his people" (*Angus*). "His style, though inferior to that of Isaiah in power and sublimity, is marked by pathos and tenderness, in accordance with what seems to have been the cast of his mind. He excels in expressing and awakening the softer emotions" (*Litton, Lowth*). With this *Horne* agrees, and he adds, "The middle part of his book is almost entirely historical, and is written in a plain prosaic style, suitable to historical narrative. On many occasions he is very elegant and sublime, especially in xlvi.—li. 1—59, which are wholly poetical, and in which the Prophet approaches very near the sublimity of Isaiah."

Two or three of the prophecies of Jer. clearly announce the Messiah. Thus, in xxiii. 5, 6. He is called the Lord our righteousness, and on this passage *Dr. Hales* says this is "to intimate that He will be a mediatorial God, by whose hand we shall obtain justification from the *name*, wherefore it calls him by the name of the *name;* that is, the ineffable name *Jaoh*, here put for God Himself. Again in xxxi. 22 we have a distinct prediction of the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ; and in xxxi. 31—36, and xxxiii. 8, the efficacy of Christ's atonement, the spiritual character of the new covenant, and the inward efficacy of the Gospel are most clearly and emphatically described. Comp. Epistle to the Hebs. viii. 8—13, and x. 16, *et seq.*

The character of Jeremiah is reflected in his writings. His speech is clear and simple, incisive and pithy, and though generally speaking somewhat diffuse, yet ever rich in thought. If it lacks a lofty strain, the soaring flight of an Isaiah, yet it has beauties of its own. It is distinguished by a wealth of new imagery which is wrought out with great delicacy and deep feeling, and by a "versatility that easily adapts itself to the most various objects, and by artistic clearness" (*Ewald*). In the management of his thoughts, Jeremiah

Synopsis.

(According to Horne after Dr. Blayney.)

Introduction—Title, i. 1—3. Call of Jer. 4—10.

Part I.—PROPHECIES DELIVERED IN REIGN OF JOSIAH ..... ii.—xii.

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Discourse 1 ..... xlix. 34—39.
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Discourse 5 ..... xxvii.—xxviii. 1—16.
Discourse 6 ..... l., li. 1—58.
Discourse 7 ..... xxi. 1—14.
Discourse 8 ..... xxxiv. 1—22.
Discourse 9 ..... xxxvii. 1—21.
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Part IV.—EVENTS IN JUDAH FROM TAKING OF JERUS. TO RETREAT INTO EGYPT.

Discourse 1 ..... xl.—xlii.
Discourse 2 ..... xliii.—xliv.
Conclusion—added after the return from captivity..... lii.

has more recourse than other Prophets to the law and the older sacred writings; and his style is rich in repetitions and standing phrases. These peculiarities are not, however, to be regarded as signs of the progressive decline of the prophetic gift, but are to be derived from deeper foundations, from positive and fundamental causes. The continual recurrence to the law and the frequent application of the prophetic parts of Deuteronomy, was prompted by the circumstances of the time. The wider the people's apostasy from the law of God extended itself, so much the greater became the need for a renewed preaching of the law, that should point to the sore judgments there threatened against hardened sinners, now about to come into fulfilment. And as against the guile of false prophets, whose influence with the infatuated people became ever greater, the true witnesses of the Lord could have no more effective means of showing and proving the Divineness of their mission and the truth of their testimony than by bringing strongly out their connection with the old Prophets and their utterances (*Delitzsch*).

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **the words**, better, the life and acts. Some understand by the term "a collection of the prophecies of Jeremiah." **Jeremiah**, a name variously translated. Some say from *ramah*, to throw down, and so meaning "Jehovah shall throw down;" others take it from *ram*, high, and think it means, "God exalteth." **Hilkiah**, poss. the well-known priest of this name. **Anathoth**, Jos. xxi. 13, 18.[a] (2) **came**, lit. *was*, or began to come, from this time onward. **thirteenth year**, wh. would be the year after Josiah began his national reformations. **Jehoiakim**, *etc.*, Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin are omitted in this reference, for they reigned only three months each.[b]

The young Christian.—The young Christian, trembling on the threshold of life of service, is equipped and comforted by his Master. I. The young Christian's fears, arising from sense of—1. Weakness, "a child," without influence, experience, stability; 2. Ignorance: how comprehend a theme into which angels desire to look? 3. Unworthiness: might not some one better known do the work required of him better? 4. Human opposition: he saw that children can see how men hate the truth. II. The young Christian's encouragements. 1. God sends him to work: "I ordained thee:" God will aid whom He sends: 2. Disclosure of God's purpose: no less God's purpose to send him than to save Israel; God's plan to use us, as well as to save others; 3. Promise of Divine presence: "I am with thee:" Wesley's saying, "The best of all is, God is with us;" 4. The message should be supplied, *v.* 9: His words are spirit and life; wisdom and power of God. Learn:—(1) Advance courageously; (2) Expect opposition: "they hated Me before they hated you;" (3) Look constantly for Divine aid.[c]

Anathoth.—A poor village of some twenty houses, built among white rocks and white ruins, on a bare, grey mountain side. No trees, no verdure, no richness, nor grandeur, nor beauty; here, amid mountain solitudes and rocky dells, he (Jeremiah) mourned and wept over the foreseen calamities of his beloved country. . . . One can trace in nearly all the images and illustrations with which his writings abound, the influence of those wild scenes amid which he passed his boyhood. Mountains, rocks, wild beasts, shepherds, are again and again introduced.[d]

4—6. (4) **word . . came**,[a] the way in which Divine messages came to the Prophets is never described. Probably they distinctly heard an inward voice; or felt an impulse to utter certain things. (5) **formed thee**, the figurative assertion of God's predestination of Jeremiah to the prophetic office, in fulfilment of the Divine plan.[b] **knew thee**, in the sense of "approved of thee" as a fit agent for My purpose. **sanctified thee**, in the sense of "set thee apart," not in the sense of "made thee holy."[c] **ordained thee**, or appointed thee by this public call. **nations**, generally: to other beside the Jewish nation. (6) **child**, either as young in years,[d] or as inexperienced.[e] He had never occupied any public position.

Fears and comforts in prospect of labour for God (*vv.* 5—9).—

[a] Josephus says this town is 20 stadia distant fr. Jerusalem, and Jerome describes it as three Rom. miles north of that city.

"Dr. Robinson considers the present Anâta to occupy the site of this ancient town, portions of the wall of which, as also the foundations of some of the houses, still remain."—*Henderson.*

[b] "The first and last of the kings under whom each Prophet prophesied are often thus specified in the general title."—*Fausset.*

"From the sixth *v.* of this chapter we may infer that Jeremy was very young when he was called by God to the prophetic office."—*Lowth.*

[c] *Hire.*

[d] *Dr. Porter.*

[a] "This call was part of Jeremiah's first address to the people. It was no afterthought, but a public proclamation, by wh. from the first he stood forth, claiming to act by an external authority, and to speak not his own words, but those of Jehovah."—*Spk. Com.*

I. The fears of God's servant in prospect of labour. 1. He feels his weakness, having no influence, no experience, being unstable; 2. He feels his ignorance; 3. His unworthiness; 4. He dreads the enmity of man. II. The comforts of God's servants in the prospect of labour. 1. The assurance they are called to the work; 2. The knowledge of the purpose of God; 3. The promise of the presence of God; 4. The fact that the message is from God.[f]

Jeremiah.—

I am the man sore smitten with the wrath
Of Him who fashion'd me; my heart is faint,
And crieth out. Spare, spare, O God! Thy saint
But yet with darkness doth He hedge my path.

My eyes with streams of fiery tears run down
To see the daughter of my people slain,
And in Jerusalem the godless reign.
Trouble on trouble are upon me thrown;

Mine adversaries clap their sinful hands
The while they hiss and wag their heads, and say,
"Where is the temple but of yesterday—
The noblest city of a hundred lands?"
We do confess our guilt; then, Lord, arise,
Avenge, avenge us of our enemies![g]

7—10. (7) **say not**, *etc.*, comp. Ex. vi. 30, vii. 1, 2. **thou shalt go**, God renews a command which requires a simple and unquestioning obedience. (8) **of their faces**, the look of an audience often terrifies a young and untried speaker, and as Jeremiah had bitter judgments to announce, the faces would be likely to daunt him. **I am with thee**, the usual and all-sufficing assurance.[a] (9) **touched my mouth**,[b] as a symbol of the bestowment of grace for the speaking or prophesying required. (10) **set thee over**, or given thee the oversight: set thee to have an eye to the conduct and the future of the nations. **build . . plant**, indicating the restoration of nations when they are duly repentant and reformed.

Jeremiah, a lesson for the disappointed (*v.* 8).—Sketch the ungrateful treatment of the Prophets by the Israelites: of all persecuted Prophets we know most of Jeremiah. See—I. How these words apply to him: his ministry may be summed up in three words: 1. Good hope; 2. Labour; 3. Disappointment. II. How these words apply to us.[c]

Providential interpositions.—The goodness or mercy of God is seen when it interposes for the help of man. Thus Moses was preserved on the margin of the Nile. The ravens, in a time of famine, bring Elijah bread and flesh, 1 Kings xvii. 6. The story is known how Du Moulin, during the massacre of the Huguenots, in Paris, was cherished for a fortnight by a hen, which came constantly and laid her eggs where he was concealed. Also how, at Calais, an Englishman, who crept into a hole under a staircase, was there preserved by means of a spider, which had woven its web over the hole, and so the soldiers slighted the search there. It is related of Aristomenes that, being thrown for dead into a ditch along with others, he found his way out by means of a fox which came thither, and pointed a passage out. Lord Mountjoy, coming from Ireland, had perished, together with his ship's company, had not Providence wonderfully preserved them by

b Is. xlix. 1, 5.

c "When Jehovah declares that He had sanctified the Prophet before his birth, the meaning is not that He had cleansed him fr. the pollution of original sin, as some have supposed, but that He had separated him in His eternal counsel to the work in which he was to be engaged."—*Henderson.*

d It is supposed that at his call Jeremiah was under 25 years of age.

e For the reluctance of men to do God's work, comp. Ex. iv. 10, vi. 12, 30; Jno. i. 3.

f Stems and Twigs.

g G. Smith.

a Ex. iii. 12; De. xxxi. 8; Jos. i. 5.

b Comp. Is. vi. 7, li. 16.

"God, by this visible sign, assures him that He had conferred upon him the gift of utterance, and imparted His will and purposes in such a measure to him that his words ought to be esteemed the oracles of God."—*Lowth.*

c J. H. Newman.

v. 10. *Dr. G. Croft*, ii. 48; *A. Fuller*, 683.

"It is reported that in the Tamul language there is no word for hope. Alas! poor men, if we were all as destitute of the blessed comfort itself as these Tamul speakers are of the word! What must be the misery of

souls in hell where they remember the word, but can never know hope itself!"—*Spurgeon.*

d Crane.

means of certain sea-birds. Camerarius relates how, in the time of a siege, the inhabitants, who were sorely pressed by the Turks, placed a large store of beehives on the walls of the besieged place, and furiously tumbling down the hives on their enemies, the latter were so desperately stung, that in a pang of indignation they gave up the siege, to the inexpressible joy of the besieged Christians, who were holpen by these new and wonderful recruits! And thus is mercy displayed in the meanest creatures.[d]

a It is the first of trees to blossom, and hence the Romans applied to it the epithets "vigilant" and "watchful." Its blossoms, which are white and plentiful, burst forth in January, even before the leaf-buds appear.

b The seething pot is a figure of the Chaldæans; and the conception seems to be that it will boil over, and the contents pour down to the desolation of Jerusalem.

Lit., from the face of the region situated towards the north.

c "Or 'Each prince shall pitch his royal pavilion, with all the marks of sovereignty belonging to it, in token of having obtained a complete victory, and taken entire possession of the city.'"—*Lowth.*

"In the destruction of Jerusalem the Chaldæans would but fulfil the purposes and councils of God."—*Henderson.*

r. 11. *J. Saurin*, vii. 294.

d Dr. Bonar.

e Paxton.

11—16. (11) seest thou, this indicates that God guided the Prophet by *visions*. rod, or *branch*. almond tree, wh., putting forth its flowers before its leaves, is an image of wakefulness and activity.[a] The Heb. words *shaked*, an almond tree, and *shoked*, hastening, have an affinity in their sound. So the almond is made the symbol of God's hastening. (12) hasten, or I watch for opportunity to perform it. (13) seething pot, a metal vessel used for cooking meat. The seething intimates that it was boiling furiously. north, the district of the Chaldæans.[b] (14, 15) families . . north, the Assyrian kingdom is treated in the Bible as a composite kingdom, consisting of many provinces and nations. his throne, intimating a general council and determination to destroy the city.[c] (16) judgments, as distinct from prophecies.

The almond tree in blossom.—"A little after sunrise, went out by the Jaffa gate, and, turning to the left, took the path that winds down the slope of Zion. As I went along, the pleasant sound of bees, 'the wild bees of Palestine,' clustering over the pink blossoms of an almond tree on the left, greeted me. The tree itself, all flower, without a single leaf, was a gay contrast to the dark olives below. A few days ago it was brown and bare; to-day it is all brightness: and to this sudden change reference is made when Jeremiah is taken to one of the orchards of Anathoth and bidden look at the 'rod of the almond tree,' for it is added, 'I will hasten My word to perform it.'"[d]—*Note on v.* 13.—To compensate in some measure for the scarcity of fuel, the Orientals endeavour to consume as little as possible in preparing their victuals. For this purpose they make a hole in their dwellings, about a foot and a half deep, in which they put their earthen pots, with the meat in them, closed up, about the half above the middle; three fourth parts they lay about with stones, and the fourth part is left open, through which they fling in their dried dung, and any other combustible substances they can procure, which burn immediately, and produce so great a heat, that the pot becomes as hot as if it stood over a strong fire of coals; so that they boil their meat with greater expedition and much less fuel than it can be done upon the hearth. The hole in which the pot is set has an aperture on one side, for the purpose of receiving the fuel, which seems to be what Jeremiah calls the face of the pot. "I see," said the Prophet, "a pot, and the face thereof is towards the north:" intimating that the fuel to heat it was to be brought from that quarter. This emblematical prediction was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar, whose dominions lay to the north of Palestine, led his armies against Jerusalem, and overturned the thrones of the house of David.[e]

17—19. (17) gird . . loins, the sign of earnest preparation

for work,[a] and fixity of purpose to do it thoroughly. not dismayed, at the opposition he was certain to meet with.[b] confound, *marg.*, "break to pieces." (18) a defenced city, *i.e.* like one, guarded well round with Divine defences.[c] iron pillar, symbol of his Divinely strengthened *will*. (19) not prevail, and with such an assurance Jeremiah may well banish all timidity and hesitation. "They shall no more prevail against thee, than they could against an impregnable wall or fortress."

Opposition (*v.* 19).—In proportion as we are faithful to God we are assailed by man. I. The vehemence of our foes, "fight against thee;" they do not fight against principle so much as against persons. II. The certainty of our security, "they shall not prevail." Saints may be weary, maimed, fearful: but not, in the end, defeated. III. The source of our confidence. 1. The abiding presence of the Lord; 2. The constant manifestation of the power of the Lord.[d]

[a] Job xxxviii. 3; 1 Pet. i. 13.

[b] "Naturally despondent and self-distrustful, there was no feebleness in Jeremiah's character, and he possessed a far higher quality than physical courage in his power of patient endurance."—*Spk. Com.*

[c] Comp. Eze. iii. 9. Also Je. xv. 10, xx. 2, xxiii. 18, etc., xxvi. 10, xxxv. 15, xxxviii. 6.

[d] *Stems and Twigs.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—4. (1) moreover, this first prophecy is to be closely connected with the call. (2) ears of Jerusalem, *i.e.* in the most public places where audience is to be gained. This implies that the Prophet was to leave Anathoth. remember thee, or, *for thee;* what thou hast so strangely forgotten. "Israel is here represented as a young bride."[a] The reference is to the forty years in the wilderness of Sinai.[b] (3) holiness, *i.e.* a consecrated thing.[c] (Lev. xxii. 10, the same word is used.) offend, or incur the guilt of touching a sacred thing. (4) Jacob .. Israel, though the ten tribes had been taken into captivity, many of the Israelite nation remained, blended with Judah; and *all* are addressed.

The ingratitude of men (*vv.* 4—6).—Here we are called to consider—I. The complaint he makes: it may be urged against us, for there is—1. The same folly; 2. The same ingratitude. II. His challenge in relation to it. 1. Have you ever found Him a hard master? 2. Or less gracious or merciful than He professed to be? Tell me then—(1) What will ye say in justification of yourselves? 2. What line of conduct will ye henceforth pursue?[d]

[a] Eze. xvi. 8; Ho. ii. 20; Joel i. 8.

[b] "Prob. the *v.* is intended to set forth the zeal and piety they had evinced at that early period, and which were as strikingly contrasted with their idolatrous practices at the time of the Prophet."—*Henderson.*

[c] "A people particularly dedicated to Me, as the firstfruits of the increase of the ground are, by their law, consecrated to God. Ex. xxiii. 19.

[d] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

5—8. (5) what iniquity, or injustice in dealing with them.[a] vanity, the usual description of idols, and idolatrous worship.[b] become vain, its worshippers acquiring its character.[c] Ps. cxv. 8. (6) led .. wilderness, *comp.* De. viii. 15, 16, xxxii. 10.[d] deserts, *etc.*, figures to represent the entire lack of all ordinary conveniences of life; and many dangers present.[e] (7) plentiful country, *lit.* a Carmel-land. The fertile district of Carmel being made to represent the whole land.[f] (8) handle the law, *i.e.* the Scribes, or perhaps Levites. pastors, *i.e.* the temporal rulers. prophets, *i.e.* those who received and communicated special Divine messages.

Three shameful possibilities of human life (*vv.* 6—8).—I. The possibility of dishonouring the great memories of life. 1. As when the vividness of their recollection fades; 2. When their moral purpose is overlooked or misunderstood; 3. When their stimulating and strengthening function is suspended. II. The possibility of under-estimating the interpositions of God. 1. Re-

[a] Mi. vi. 3.

[b] Je. x. 15, xiv. 14, 22, xvi. 19; 1 Co. viii. 4.

[c] "A people's character never rises above that of its gods, wh. are its 'better nature.'"—*Bacon.*

[d] Is. lxiii. 9, 11, 13; Ho. xiii. 4.

[e] "A more frightful desert it had hardly been our lot to behold. The mountains beyond presented

member the Deliverer; 2. And the Giver. III. The possibility of the leading minds of the Church being darkened and perverted. 1. Such men should watch themselves with constant jealousy; 2. Such men should never be forgotten by those who pray.[e]

Note on v. 6.—When the Prophet describes this wilderness, according to our version, as the land of the shadow of death, his meaning has been differently understood by different people. Some have supposed it to mean a place where there were no comforts or conveniences of life, but this seems too general; and to explain it as a particular and distinct member of the description, pointing out some quality different from the other circumstances mentioned by Jeremiah, seems to be a more just, as it is undoubtedly a more lively way of interpreting the Prophet. Others have accordingly understood this clause as signifying, it was the habitation of venomous serpents, or destroying beasts; some as endangering those that passed through it, as being surrounded by the hostile tribes of Arabs: some as being overshadowed by trees of a deleterious quality. They might better have introduced the whirlwinds of those southern deserts than the last particular, which winds, taking up the sand in great quantities, darken the air, and prove fatal to the traveller. This last would be giving great beauty and energy to the expression (the shadow of death), since these clouds of dust, literally speaking, overshadow those that have the misfortune to be then passing through those deserts, and must, at the same time, give men the utmost terror of being overwhelmed by them, and not unfrequently do in fact prove deadly. Another clause, a land of pits, is also a part of the Prophet's description. Irwin affords a good comment on this part of our translation: in the one place he says, "The path winded round the side of the mountain, and to our left, a horrid chasm, some hundred fathoms deep, presented itself to our view. It is surprising no accident befell the loaded camels." In another, "On each side of us were perpendicular steeps some hundred fathoms deep. On every part is such a wild confusion of hanging precipices, disjointed rocks, and hideous chasms, that we might well cry out with the poet, 'Chaos is come again.' Omnipotent Father! to Thee we trust for our deliverance from the perils that surround us. 'It was through this wilderness that Thou didst lead Thy chosen people.' It was here Thou didst manifest thy signal protection, in snatching them from the jaws of destruction which opened upon every side." And in the next page, "At two o'clock we came suddenly upon a dreadful chasm in the road, which appears to have been the effect of an earthquake. It is about three hundred yards long, one hundred yards wide, and as many deep; and, what is a curiosity, in the middle of the gulf, a single column of stone raises its head to the surface of the earth. The rudeness of the work, and the astonishing length of the stone, announce it to be a *lusus naturæ*, though the robbers declared to us that beneath the column there lies a prodigious sum of money; and added, with a grave face, they have a tradition, that none but a Christian's hand can remove the stone to come at it. We rounded the gulf, which was called Somah, and leaving it behind us, we entered a valley where we found a very craggy road." The first clause in this passage, through a land of deserts, is the most obscure and difficult to ascertain. Instead of travelling in the night, as he had proposed,

a most uninviting and hideous aspect; precipices and naked conical peaks of chalky and gravelly formation, rising one above another, without a sign of life or vegetation."—*Robinson.*

f Is. x. 18. xvi. 10, xxxvii. 24.

g Dr. J. Parker.

v. 5. *W. Dunlop*, 2.

vv. 6, 7. *E. Scobell*, 313.

"After we had passed the salt desert, we came to the Malek-el-moat-dereh, or the valley of the angel of death. This extraordinary appellation, and the peculiar nature of the whole of this tract of land, broken into deep ravines, without water, of a dreariness without example, will, perhaps, be found forcibly to illustrate Jer. ii. 6."—*Morier.*

"Upward steals the life of man, as the sunshine from the wall; from the wall into the sky; from the roof along the spire. Ah! the souls of those that die are but sunbeams lifted higher."—*Longfellow.*

Life is a thing which many people seem in a great hurry to get rid of, if we may judge by the number of "fast" young men nowadays, who use themselves up with the greatest apparent satisfaction.

to avoid the burning heat of the sun, he says, "At seven o'clock we halted for the night. The Arabs tell us that the roads are too rugged and dangerous to travel over in the dark." Under the next day, "we reached the foot of a prodigious high mountain, which we cannot ascend in the dark." The following day, he tells us, "by six o'clock we had accoutred our camels, and leading them in our hands, began to ascend the mountain on foot; as we mounted the steep, we frequently blessed ourselves that we were not riding, as the path was so narrow, the least false step must have sent the beast down the bordering precipice." Under another day he remarks that the greatest part of that day's journey was "over a succession of hills and dales, where the road was so intricate and broken, that nothing but a camel could get over it. The appearance of the road is so frightful in many places, that we do not wonder why our people have hitherto lain by in the night."[h]

9—13. (9) plead, as in a court of law.[a] with you, the present generation. children's children,[b] who will further develop the idolatry and rebellion. (10) isles of Chittim,[c] coast lands of the Mediterranean Sea. Kedar, fig. for the Eastern lands.[d] (11) changed their gods, the tenacity with which men keep hold of national religions has always been very marked. their glory, wh. was the revelation to them of the one, living, and spiritual God. (12) very desolate, or dry. The heavens are poetically called on to shrivel and dry up in horror at such conduct. (13) broken cisterns,[e] such as have cracks or rents, through which the water wastes away.

The fountain and the cistern (*v.* 13).—In these two evils we have all the sins of the people summed up,—apostasy and self-sufficiency. I. The fountain forsaken. 1. Its nature: 2. Its contents,—God, a Fountain of cleansing influence—of cheering influence—of reviving power—of fertilising results. This fountain is forsaken when men cease to think of God as the chief end of their life—when they overlook the law of God—when they do not cleave to the word of God—when they are beginning to look back to old times of bondage—when they look away from the cleansing fountain to their own works. II. The cistern preferred. 1. Domestic happiness; 2. Professional life; 3. Intellectuality; 4. Social life. III. The disappointment involved. 1. That of one who has spent his best time and strength to no purpose; 2. Of one who must after all go to the rejected fountain; 3. Who finds that his past life has been a grievous sin.

Note on v. 13.—In Eastern language, "living water" signifies springing water, that which bubbles up. The people had forsaken Jehovah, the never-failing Spring, for the small quantity which could be contained in a cistern; nay, in broken cisterns, which would let out the water as fast as they received it. When people forsake a good situation for that which is bad, it is said, "Yes; the stork which lived on the borders of the lake, where there was a never-failing supply of water, and constant food, has gone to dwell on the brink of a well," *i.e.* where there is no fish, and where the water cannot be had.[f]

14—19. (14) slave? God called him to be *son*, not slave, Ex. iv. 22. why . . spoiled? the answer must be, on account of his sins, so he must not charge God with his calamities. (15)

"Far more valued is the vine that bends beneath its swelling clusters, than the dark and joyless ivy, round the cloister's wall wreathing its barren arms."—*Southey.*

h Harmer.

a "The expression is taken from the pleas of plaintiff and defendant, used in a court of justice."—*Lowth.*

b "This expression is designedly used, to intimate that the final judgment on the nation would be suspended for many generations."—*Horsley.*

c See *Kittim*, Ge. x. 4.

d Ge. xxv. 13; Ps. cxx. 5; Cant. i. 5.

e "The usual plan is to dig a tank in the ground, build round with stonework, sometimes raising this several feet above the ground, and putting on it a roof. These cisterns are very liable to crack and leak, esp. those near the surface of the ground and unscientifically constructed; and no more expressive fig. of untrustworthiness could be found than a leaky tank."—*Thomson.*

f Roberts.

a Comp. Job iv. 10, 11; Ps. xxxiv.

young lions, type of the dangers into wh. Israel's rebellion had brought him. Lions are sometimes taken to represent the Babylonian princes.[a] (16) Noph, Tahapanes,[b] places in Egypt. broken . . crown, *marg.* "feed on thy crown," or devour the best part of thy country. (17) to thyself, by thy own doings. (18) way of Egypt, at this time some of the rulers were inclined to alliance with Egypt, while others favoured alliance with Assyria.[c] (19) thine . . thee, the natural consequences of wrong-doing prove to be Divine judgments.

Note on v. 18.—The Euphrates is always muddy, and the water, consequently, not good to drink unless it has stood an hour or two in earthen vessels for the sand and impurities to settle, which at times lie half a finger thick at the bottom of the vessel. Hence it was not without reason that the Lord said to the Israelites, by the Prophet Jeremiah, "What hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?" (Euphrates.) For this reason we find in the houses of the city and villages, particularly those lying on the Great River, many large earthen vessels holding a pailful or two, which they fill from the Euphrates, and do not use till the impurities have settled at the bottom, unless they are very thirsty, and then they drink through their pocket-handkerchiefs.—(Rauwolf.)[d]

20—22. (20) broken thy yoke, that which Egypt laid upon thee. But God gave Israel many gracious deliverances, and received from Israel repeated promises of faithful service.[a] high hill, *etc.*, Is. lvii. 5—7. (21) noble vine, *see* Is. v. 1, etc. right seed, fructified and of good quality. unto me, or to my hurt and vexation. (22) nitre, not saltpetre, but the *natron* of Egypt, a mineral alkali.[b] sope, Heb. *borîth*, a vegetable alkali now called *potash*. Combined with oil it was used for washing. marked, as a stain that cannot be got out.[c]

Sin aroused by the law.—A contented citizen of Milan, who had never passed beyond its walls during the course of sixty years, being ordered by its governor not to stir beyond its gates, became immediately miserable, and felt so powerful an inclination to do that which he had so long contentedly neglected, that, on his application for a release from this restraint being refused, he became quite melancholy, and at last died of grief. How well this illustrates the Apostle's confession that he had not known lust unless the law had said unto him, "Thou shalt not covet!" "Sin," saith he, "taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Evil often sleeps in the soul until the holy command of God is discovered, and then the enmity of the carnal mind rouses itself to oppose in every way the will of God. "Without the law," says Paul, "sin was dead." How vain to hope for salvation from the law, when through the perversity of sin it provokes our evil hearts to rebellion, and works in us neither repentance nor love.[d]

23—25. (23) say, in self-defence.[a] valley, of Hinnom, ch. vii. 32.[b] swift dromedary, a "young female wh. has never had a foal." (24) wild ass, "symbol of an untamed and reckless nature." her occasion, the pairing season. (25) thirst, or lusting after these vain idols. "Do not wear out thy shoes and expose thyself to thirst and weariness in undertaking long

10, lviii. 6; Je. li. 17; Eze. xix. 3, 6; Nah. ii. 11, 12.

b "Noph, or Memphis, capital of Lower Egypt, on the W. bank of the Nile. Tahapanes, or Daphne, on the Tanitic branch of the Nile. These two cities stand for the whole of Egypt."—*Fausset.*

c "The two rivers are the two empires, and to drink their waters is to adopt their principles and religion."—*Sok. Com.*

v. 17. *J. Marriott*, 243.

d Rosenmuller.

a Ex. xix. 8; Jos. xxiv. 18; Jn. x. 16; 1 Sa. xii. 10.

b "It was an incrustation at the bottom of the lakes, after the summer heat has evaporated the water. It was used for washing. (Job ix. 30; Pr. xxv. 20).—*Fausset.*

c "Though thou useest ever so many methods of washing away thy sins.... yet the marks or stains will always appear in the sight of God, till they are done away by a sincere repentance and reformation."—*Lowth.*

d C. H. Spurgeon.

a "The people prob. appealed to the maintenance of the daily sacrifice, and the Mosaic ritual; and even more confidently perhaps to Josiah's splendid restoration of the

journeys to make new alliances with idolaters." no hope, marg. "Is the case desperate?"

Self-vindicating sinners reproved (*vv.* 23, 24).—I. The self-vindicating ways of sinners. 1. In a way of direct denial; 2. Of vain excuse; 3. Of hypocritical palliation. II. The charge which God brings against them. 1. By an appeal to fact; 2. By a most apt comparison.[c]

26—30. (26) house of Israel, here the whole Heb. people remaining in their land. (27) stock, a thing that cannot move itself. stone, this word being feminine in Hebrew is represented as a mother. back[a] unto me, a token of contempt and aversion. (28) where . . gods, why do not they comfort and help you in your troubles? cities . . gods, besides the national deities, tutelary gods abounded. (29) plead with me, for help in trouble-time. (30) sword . . prophets, with prob. allusion to the violent persecutions of Manasseh.[b]

The folly of neglecting God (*vv.* 27, 28).—I. The conduct of sinners towards their God. 1. It is a state of ease; 2. Of trouble. II. The folly and danger of it. 1. The disappointment it will occasion; 2. The reflections to which it will give rise. Address —(1) Those that are at ease in their sins; (2) Those who are brought into any kind of trouble; (3) Those that have already begun to seek the Lord.[c]

Folly of idolatry shown.—The following incident occurs in the life of the Anglo-Saxon missionary, Winfrid, afterwards called Boniface. On his recommencing his missionary work in Hessia, he found that, during his absence (at Rome), many of the converts had relapsed into their old superstitions, and therefore resolved to destroy one of the chief objects of veneration in the neighbourhood in which he was labouring: this was an eminent oak near Giesmar, in Upper Hesse, which for ages had been sacred to Thor, the god of thunder. Many times had the zealous missionary declaimed against this idolatry, but without effect. He determined, therefore, to strike a blow at the object itself, and remove, if possible, the stumbling-block from their midst. Mr. Maclear (*Missions of the Middle Ages*) thus describes the scene:—"One day, accompanied by all his clergy, he advanced, axe in hand, to cut down the offending monarch of the forest. The people assembled in thousands to witness the great controversy between the new and the old belief, many enraged at the interference of the stranger preacher, many more confident that an instant judgment would strike down so daring an offender. But scarcely had the missionary begun to ply his axe than it was apparent that Thor could not defend his own. If he was a god, he was certainly either 'gone on a journey,' or was 'asleep and needed awaking;' for in vain his votaries supplicated his vengeance. After a few blows of the axe, a crashing was heard in the topmost boughs: a mighty rushing wind, says the chronicler, seemed to shake every branch, and then the leafy idol came down to the ground, and split into four quarters. 'The Lord, He is the God!' the people shouted, thus acknowledging the superior might of the new faith."[d]

31—34. (31) O generation, a highly-impassioned exclamation. have . . darkness? a strong appeal.[a] are lords, and will have our own will. (32) ornaments, Oriental females

temple, and to the suppression of the open worship of Baal. All such pleas availed little as long as the rites of Molech were still privately practised."—*Spk. Com.*

b 2 Ki. xxiii. 10.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

a Heb. *noreph*, properly the hinder part of the neck.

b Josephus tells us that both the prophets, and religious men generally, were put to death in large numbers by this relentless king.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"As there is a foolish wisdom, so there is a wise ignorance, in not prying into God's ark, not inquiring into things not revealed. I would fain know all that I need, and all that I may: I leave God's secrets to Himself. It is happy for me that God makes me of His court, though not of His council."—*Bp. Hall.*

"A man is never astonished or ashamed that he doesn't know what another does, but he is surprised at the gross ignorance of the other in not knowing what he does."—*Haliburton.*

d Hassell.

a "So far was Jehovah from proving a niggardly and au-

stere sovereign to the Jews, that He had evinced Himself to be their most liberal benefactor. Nothing but wantonness could have induced them to renounce their subjection to Him."—*Henderson.*

b C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 34. *Dr. G. E. Biber*, 141, 154; *E. Bather*, i. 86.

"Sincerity! thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave thy onward path, although the earth should gape, and from the gulf of hell destruction cry, to take dissimulation's winding way.—*Home.*

Be truly religious, and do not care to seem to be so.

"Who by kindness and smooth attention can insinuate a hearty welcome to an unwelcome guest, is a hypocrite superior to a thousand plain dealers."—*Lavater.*

b Roberts.

greatly pride themselves on their ornaments. attire, or girdles for the breast. The marriage girdle in the E. taking the place of the marriage ring with us. (33) trimmest, *etc.*, makest effort to learn foreign and base idolatries. wicked . . ways, better, thy ways wickedness. (34) blood, *etc.*, of idolatrous persecutions: or with a reference to the children offered to Moloch. not . . secret, or by breaking into the house, by digging through like a thief.

God's complaint against the rebellious (*vv.* 31, 32).—I. God's appeal in answer to your charges against Him. 1. Was He to the Jews a wilderness or a land of darkness? 2. Has He in His conduct to us deserved any such humiliating imputation? II. His charge against you. He complains of two things. 1. The flagrancy of your rebellion; 2. The contemptuousness of your neglect. Apply:—(1) Are any of you disposed to vindicate yourselves? (2) Are any of you humbled under a sense of your guilt?[b]

35—37. (35) innocent, the people made loud professions, in the time of the reformation of Josiah, but God knew they were not sincere. plead, here the word means as a judge, not as a plaintiff. (36) gaddest, travellest, dost wander about. Turning now to Egypt and now to Assyria. (37) from him, *i.e.* from Egypt, to wh. land the people were then turning. hands . . head,[a] the sign of failure and despair. "The ambassadors thou sendest to Egypt shall return with disappointment and confusion."

Note on v. 37.—Impenitent Jerusalem was to be punished for revolting against God: and, as a token of her misery, she was to go forth with her "hands on her head." Tamar "laid her hand on her head," as a sign of her degradation and sorrow. When people are in great distress, they put their hands on their heads, the fingers being clasped on the top of the crown. Should a man who is plunged into wretchedness meet a friend, he immediately puts his hands on his head to illustrate his circumstances. When a person hears of the death of a relation or friend, he forthwith clasps his hands on his head. When boys have been punished at school, they run home with their hands on the same place. Parents are much displeased and alarmed when they see their children with their hands in that position, because they look upon it not merely as a sign of grief, but as an emblem of bad fortune. Thus of those who had trusted in Egypt and Assyria it was said, "Thou shalt be ashamed" of them: and they were to go forth with their hands on their head in token of their degradation and misery.[b]

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—3. (1) they say, or, that is to say. The Prophet gives his conclusion. shall . . again,[a] see the law, Dc. xxiv. 4. that land, in wh. such people dwelt as could take back an adulteress. yet return, some regard this as an imperative;[b] but others render, "and thinkest thou to return unto Me?"[c] (2) high places, the scenes of idolatries, which are regarded as spiritual adulteries. in the ways, illus. by Ge. xxxviii. 14.

a "Contrary to all precedent in the case of adultery, Jehovah offers a return to Judah, the spiritual adulteress."—*Fausset.*
b Syr., Vulg., Targ., Calvin, etc.
c Spk. Com.

Arabian, or desert robber, watching for prey.[d] (3) showers, *etc.*, see De. xxviii. 24.

Note on v. 2.—Every one knows the general intention of the Prophet, but Chardin has given so strong and lively a description of the eagerness that attends their looking out for prey, that I am persuaded my readers will be pleased with it. "Thus the Arabs wait for caravans with the most violent avidity, looking about them on all sides, raising themselves up on their horses, running here and there to see if they cannot perceive any smoke, or dust, or tracks on the ground, or any other marks of people passing along."[e]

4, 5. (4) from this time, *i.e.* the time of Josiah's reformation. God would have the penitent return not merely an outward act, but inward and sincere. the guide,[a] *lit.* familiar friend, but here meaning *husband*. Father, husband, are the "two most endearing appellations that could have been employed." (5) spoken, in the public profession of reformation. as thou couldest, *i.e.* persistently. "Her words were fair, but her deeds were false."

The guide of youth (*v.* 4).—I. The young need a guide—1. On account of their ignorance; 2. On account of their natural buoyancy; 3. Of their dangerous surroundings. II. God is willing to become their guide—1. By His Word; 2. By His providence; 3. By His Spirit. III. God expects them to show a desire that He would become their guide. 1. They must pray to Him; 2. They must pray to Him as a Father. IV. God wishes them to apply to Him immediately. This time—1. Is the commanded time; 2. Most suitable; 3. May be the only time.[b]—*The proper prayer of youth.*—Relate some story to illustrate the usefulness of guides to travellers in foreign lands, as among the mountains of Switzerland, etc. 1. The journey of life. 1. Things unknown—length, trials, enemies, temptations, etc.; 2. Things desired—prosperity, length of days, friends, happiness, to "rejoice and be glad all our days," etc.: 3. Things certain—a journey to be only once made, will certainly end; the end will answer to the way. "What will ye do in the end?" II. The pilgrim of life. A youthful traveller is supposed. 1. Such are inexperienced; 2. Think they know more than they really do; 3. Often wilful and wayward; 4. Travelling through unknown land; 5. Need help and provision of a spiritual kind for the journey. III. The guide of life. Many false guides—custom, fashion, human reasons, etc. Only one safe Guide—God. He has all that a good guide should have. 1. Knowledge of way; 2. Sympathy with the traveller; 3. Strength and vigilance to meet and defeat danger; 4. Constant presence. If we say "yes" to the text, then—(1) The start will be in the right direction; (2) The way will be in the safe path; (3) The end will be in the best place.[c]

Lady Huntingdon.—It is recorded of the late Countess of Huntingdon, who afterwards so warmly espoused the cause of God and His truth, that in her early youth, when about nine years old, the sight of a corpse about her own age carried to the grave induced her to attend the funeral, when the first impressions of deep seriousness respecting an eternal world were made on her conscience.[d]

d "The Arabs of the desert to the east and south of Palestine were notorious for their habit of robbing travellers, as they still are at the present day."—*Henderson.*
e *Harmer.*

a "As having espoused them in the days of their youth, before their manners were corrupted by idolatry. Je. ii. 2; Ho. ii. 15."—*Lowth.*

b *G. Brooks.*

v. 4. *E. Cooper*, iii. 206; *W. Jay*, ii. 258; *E. Blencowe*, i. 23.

"The first breath of morn is sweeter than the last breath of evening. The earliest snowdrop is lovelier than the latest rose. As the firstfruits of the ground, and the firstlings of the flock, were offered up to the Lord in the olden time, so offer up to Him your youthful affections and your youthful service."—*Mogridge.*

c *Hive.*

Our weakest years engender passions which our strongest are unable to eradicate.

"Our youth and manhood we owe to our country, but our declining years are due to ourselves."—*Pliny.*

d *R. T. S.*

6—11. (6) said also, on another occasion. backsliding, the word used is not an adjective, but a substantive, and the clause should read, "Hast thou seen Backsliding, even Israel?" gone up, or goes up. (7) treacherous sister, so called bec. Judah was as bad as Israel, but Judah made a good outward show and profession.[a] (8) bill of divorce,[b] a fig. for God's putting away the ten tribes. (9) lightness, or the fame, report. defiled, or profaned. stones, *etc.*, ch. ii. 27. (10) feignedly, *Heb.* "in falsehood." The Jews' professions of amendment were hypocritical and insincere.[c] (11) more . . Judah, bec. Judah had the additional warning of the fate of Israel, and disregarded even that.[d]

Comparative criminality (*v.* 11).—The criminality of Judah exceeded that of Israel. I. State this decision of the Lord. II. Confirm it. 1. It argues a greater depravity of heart; 2. It casts more dishonour upon God; 3. It does more extensive injury to man. Address—(1) Those who are careless about religion; (2) Those who make a profession of religion.[e]

12—15. (12) toward the north, the region to wh. the "ten tribes" had been carried by Shalmaneser. return, *etc.*, lit. "turn, thou that hast turned." anger to fall,[a] in further judgments. merciful, this is the highest and most moving of all incentives to repentance.[b] (13) acknowledge thine iniquity, penitence being the essential condition of restoration. (14) married unto you, and so long to be in gracious and dear relations. one . . family, prob. a prophetic fig. of the fact that only a few will ever return, but for even the few God will care.[c] (15) shepherds, pastors; as before, temporal rulers.

Pastors (*v.* 15).—They should have—1. Spiritual wisdom; 2. Authority from the unction of the Holy One; 3. Experience of religion; 4. Skill to divide the Word aright; 5. Knowledge of the state of their flocks; 6. Zeal for the glory of God; 7. Jealousy for the word and truth of God; 8. They should watch for souls; 9. Should be pious at all times; 10. They should be comforters of those that mourn; 11. They should maintain discipline in the Church; 12. They should be examples to the believers.[d]

Archbishop Adalbert.—Adalbert, who lived in the tenth century, was appointed Archbishop of Prague. This preferment seemed to give him so little satisfaction, that he was never seen to smile afterwards; and on being asked the reason, he replied, "It is an easy thing to wear a mitre and a cross; but an awful thing to give an account of a bishopric before the Judge of quick and dead."[e]

16—19. (16) in those days, the recognised formula for the times of Messiah. the ark, *etc.*, regarded as the centre of the Mosaic system. It appears that the ark was finally lost in the Babylonish captivity. visit it, better, "neither shall it be missed." that be done, or, "neither shall it be made, or repaired."[a] (17) Jerusalem, the whole city, not specially the temple. "There the foundation of the Christian Church was laid." nations, *i.e.* the Gentiles.[b] imagination, marg. *stubbornness*. (18) with . . Israel, clearly intimating that the return was to be a united one.[c] (19) how, *i.e.* how gladly.

God's relations to His people (*v.* 19).—I. The honours which God desires to confer upon us. 1. To make us members of His

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a Comp. Eze. xxiii. 4, etc.

b "A bill of divorce is called in Heb. a *writing*, or document, *of cutting off*, and here in the plural, *a writing of cutting off* bec. she to whom such a document was given by her husband was cut off from all connection with him."—*Henderson.*

c Comp. Je. vii. 18, xix. 4; and also 2 Chr. xxxiv. 33.

d Eze. xvi. 51.

e *C. Simeon, M.A.*

a Not receive you with averted looks. So *LXX.*, *Syr.*, and *Vulg.*

b Ps. lxxxvi. 15, ciii. 8, 9.

c "However few the converts might be, Jehovah would not despise them, but would restore them to their own land. Or that, should there only be one found in a foreign city, or two in any of the nations, they should not be forgotten."—*Henderson.*

d *W. Stevens.*

re. 14, 15. *H. Marriott*, 75.

r. 15. *Dr. J. Owen*, xvii. 60; *H. Sydenham*, 272; *Dr. J. Scott*, iii. 333; *E. Cooper*, ii. 259.

e *R. T. S.*

a "Because the tabernacle of God will be one 'made without hands' (Heb. ix. 11), even the heart of His believing people."—*Sph. Com.*

b Ro. ix. 25, 26.

c "Most of the prophecies which mention the restoration of the

family; 2. To make us heirs of heaven. II. The difficulties that beset the conferring these honours upon us. 1. Arising from God's character; 2. From our own character; 3. From the greatness of the blessings. III. The effect which uniformly follows the conferring of these honours—a filial spirit towards God. 1. Reverence; 2. Love; 3. Obedience. Apply:—(1) Encourage those who doubt the possibility of their salvation; (2) Warn those who see no difficulties in the way of their salvation; (3) Exhort those who profess to be in the way of salvation.[d]—*The child at home* (*v.* 19).—I. A condition of delightful privilege,—"put among the children." A relation of endearment, dependence; involving obligations of affection, obedience; which carries with it advantages,—instruction, maintenance, inheritance. II. Some difficulties in the way of its bestowment. "How shall I?" These are insuperable to all but infinite wisdom; they spring out of the sinner's character. III. The evidences of the removal of these difficulties and the attainment of the blessing. 1. Prayer; 2. Spirit of adoption; 3. Preservation and perseverance.—*Children of God.*—Here is—I. A most delightful condition of privilege and happiness. As children of God, we are also heirs to His kingdom. II. A suggestion of difficulties in the way of our attaining this condition,—"How shall I?" etc. III. The solution of these difficulties, and the process by which we may attain these privileges,—"thou shalt call Me, My Father."[e]

20—23. (20) husband, or familiar friend. (21) weeping, *etc.*, the signs of real penitence on the part of the people. Weeping is blended with prayer for mercy. (22) return, *etc.*,[a] comp. the similar passage, Ho. xiv. 1. (23) hills, specially associated with idol worship.[b]

Backsliders reclaimed (*v.* 22).—I. God inviting backsliders to return to Him. 1. The characters addressed; 2. The sin and consequence of backsliding; 3. God's message to such characters. II. Backsliders complying with God's invitation. 1. The ready compliance they manifest; 2. The way they return to God.

The backslider's confession.—I have been a fugitive servant to the most glorious Lord and Master: I have deserted His service, and denied my obedience. But now, Lord, nail my ear to Thy door-post, that I may serve Thee for ever; nail my heart to Thy service, that no trouble, temptation, or desertion may drive me away from Thee; nail my eyes to Thy service, that I may never look upon vanity; nail my hands to Thy service, that I may never do an ill turn; nail my feet to Thy way, that I may never turn aside from Thee. Let all the faculties of my soul be nailed to Thy service and obedience.

24, 25. (24) shame, *etc.*, the people here acknowledge the unprofitableness and disgrace of their idolatry.[a] (25) we lie down, or we will lie down: prostrating ourselves humbly before God. The miseries of the captivity were recognised as Divine judgments on the national sins.[b] "The expressions are taken from those who cast themselves down upon the ground, and cover themselves with dust or ashes out of grief and anguish of mind.

God the salvation of Israel (*v.* 23).—Let me ask if this be not—1. A mighty salvation? 2. A merciful salvation? 3. A free

Jews join Judah and Israel together, as equal sharers in that blessing. (See Je. xxx. 3, xxxi. 1; Is. xi. 13; Eze. xxxvii. 16, 22; Ho. i. 11; Zec. x. 6)."—*Lowth.*

d G. Brooks.

v. 16. *Dr. Gordon*, iv. 110.

v. 17. *Dr. Gordon*, iv. 124.

"The excesses of youth are drafts upon our old age, payable with interest about thirty years after date."—*Colton.*

e J. Preston.

a "The whole description is most graphically conceived. The people weeping upon the hills; God's gracious voice bidding them return; the glad cry of the penitents proclaiming that they come; the profession of faith won from them by the Divine love; these form altogether a most touching picture of a national repentance."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The altars wh. were erected on high places to the heathen gods abounded to such a degree, that they were seen in every direction."—*Henderson.*

a "So far from bringing us salvation, they have cost us our cattle and even our children, whom we have sacrificed to them."—*Faussat.*

b Ezr. ix. 7.

salvation? 4. An unchangeable salvation? 5. A soul-satisfying salvation?[c]

c W. Wilkinson, B.A.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1, 2. (1) wilt return, *i.e.* art really willing to return.[a] put away, this would be the outward sign of the necessary repentance. then . . remove, better, "and henceforth not wander." (2) swear, by the name of the living God, truly and sincerely. "We swear by the God whom we worship."[b]

Nature of backsliding.—Backsliding is the act of turning from the path of duty. It may be considered as partial when applied to true believers, who do not backslide with the whole bent of their will: as voluntary, when applied to those who, after professing to know the truth, wilfully turn from it, and live in the practice of sin; as final, when the mind is given up to judicial hardness, as in the case of Judas. Partial backsliding must be distinguished from hypocrisy, as the former may exist when there are gracious intentions on the whole; but the latter is a studied profession of appearing to be what we are not.[c]

a "The repentance described in ch. iii. 21–25 was a hope not a reality."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Swearing by the name of God is mentioned elsewhere as a solemn part of religious worship, and opposed to the custom of swearing by false gods, which was practised among idolaters."—*Lowth.*

c *C. Buck.*

3—6. (3) break . . ground, "repent of your idolatry, and so be prepared to serve the Lord in truth."[a] thorns, or weeds, wh. would abound in the neglected soil. (4) circumcise,[b] the symbol of self-humiliation, and the sign of consecration to the Lord. fury, or vengeance. fire, with a consuming power. (5) blow . . land, raising the alarm of war. The verse pictures the fright of the people at the presence of a hostile army. (6) standard, or signal round which to rally the people.[c]

The plough for the fallows (*v.* 3).—I. The hearts of unregenerate men are like fallow ground. II. It is their duty to break up their fallow ground.[d]—*The life of the sinner a foolish agriculture* (*v.* 3).—Notice here two things. I. A grand evil. 1. Loss of seed: 2. Loss of labour; 3. Loss of hope. II. An urgent duty, evangelical repentance for sin. 1. Hard work; 2. Indispensable work.[e]

Sowing in China.—In China the fields are parted by terraces, on which some of the seed scattered in the broadcast is wont to fall in the sower's attempt to cover the headlands as well as the more central parts of the enclosure. These seeds resemble those that fell by the wayside in the parable, and are, like them, obvious to the eye of any hungry bird that may chance to fly near them. As the valleys often, in their expansion, rebut against the rocky declivities of the hills, large masses of stone constitute a fence on one or more sides of the fields. Near these stones, the monuments of ancient changes in the crust of the earth, several kinds of thorny shrubs are found growing. One of them, a species of *gardenia*, has sharp spines of more than an inch in length. The thorns referred to in the parable belonged to a species of rest-harrow, very common in the barren lanes and commons of this country. The *gardenia* and its companions, however, are very proper representatives in China, and would answer the purpose of any missionary who should take this parable as the theme of discourse in a Chinese village. The writer has a lively remembrance of these thorns, as, in crossing a farm near a pleasant ravine, he often mistook his path amidst

a "The unhumbled heart is like ground wh. may be improved, being let out to us for that purpose, but wh. is as yet fallow, overgrown with weeds, its natural product."—*Fausset.*

b De. x. 16.

c "By placing such signals on fit spots the safest route would be indicated to the fortified towns."—*Spk. Com.*

d *S. Tomlyns.*

e *Dr. Thomas.*

v. 3. *J. Weemse*, i. 163.

The cry of the penitent soul, "Have mercy on me," is more acceptable to Jesus than the chant of angels, the melody of golden harps swept by seraphic fingers, or the loud swelling anthem of heaven, though it be "as the voice of many

a labyrinth of terraces and causeways, and found himself opposed in one place by a huge stone, which he could not climb, and in another by an impervious fence of thorns. Now as these stones and thorns lay or grew at the sides of the corn-fields, the sower would, in the bountiful sweep of his hand, cast a few seeds upon both of them. If the stones were covered with a thin layer of earth, the seed might germinate in very rainy seasons; and if the thorns left a vacancy here and there between them, the grains might sprout for a time under their shade: but neither one nor the other would ever arrive at maturity. Only that seed which fell in good ground, in soil prepared by the plough and the harrow to receive it, would yield any fruit to recompense the sower for his pains.[f]

7—10. (7) lion, symbol of Assyria.[a] destroyer, *etc.*, he who has already destroyed Gentile nations. on his way, *lit.* has broken up his encampment. (8) gird, *etc.*, ch. vi. 26. (9) heart of the king, *i.e.* his spirits, his courage. "Great calamities often deprive men of their presence of mind." astonished . . wonder, &c. both these had joined in persuading the people that no such troubles should come upon them. (10) This *v.* is probably an outburst of Jeremiah's own feelings. "He had constantly to struggle with the misgivings of his own melancholy nature."[b]

Lurking place of lions.—"Having quickly armed ourselves, and left Philip in charge of my waggons, we briskly pushed our way between the thickets, winding through the willow grove, and crossing many a deep ravine. Everywhere the enormous foot of the hippopotamus had imprinted the earth with holes. Gert, who had never seen a *zee-koe*, a sea-cow, as the colonists call this animal, enjoyed the trip as much as myself, both equally anxious to gratify our curiosity. He had been less a traveller than any of the rest of my men; and therefore, like myself, had the greater novelty to expect. As we hurried on, our conversation was on nothing but the sea-cow; and his animation, excited by the subject to a higher pitch than usual, exceedingly pleased and amused me. Thus beguiling the time, my attention was diverted from the flowers that decked our path or the birds that enlivened the branches above our heads. Suddenly he stopped, and, crying out with some emotion, 'Look here, sir,' I turned my eyes downwards, and saw the recent footmarks of a lion which had been to drink at the river, apparently not more than an hour before. This gave a check to our dialogue on the hippopotamus: and in a lower and graver tone of voice, he talked now only of lions, and the danger of being alone in a place so covered with wood. That which a minute before had been praised as a delightful shady path, was now viewed as the lurking-place of lions, and of every formidable beast of prey."[c]

11—14. (11) at that time, the time of the Babylonian invasion, previously referred to. dry wind, or hot pestilential wind: the simoom.[a] fan, for such purposes the husbandman uses the wind: but he would not use the simoom. (12) full wind, or fuller, stronger, than winds that fan or cleanse. unto me, *i.e.* to perform my will. (13) he, the enemy: Nebuchadnezzar, the lion. as clouds,[b] gathering for a storm. whirlwind, swiftly moving, and overwhelming. eagles, De. xxviii.

waters." Though in the highest heaven, this plea enters His delighted ear, and secures His Almighty aid.

f Visitor.

a Nebuchadnezzar is referred to.

b "Deeply affected by this state of things, the Prophet cannot restrain his feelings, but gives them utterance in what, at first sight, appears to be a blasphemous charge against Jehovah. It is, however, but a strong Orientalism." — *Henderson.*

v. 10. *H. Alford*, i. 267.

Nazianzen compares the soul to a pair of writing-tables, out of which must be washed whatsoever was written with sin, and instead thereof must be entered the writing of grace; both these are necessary in true repentance.

c Burchell.

a It generally blows from the south-east across the dry sandy deserts to the east of Palestine.

"This simoom extends its ravages all the way

fr. the extreme end of the Gulf of Cambaya up to Mosul; it carries along with it flakes of fire like threads of silk; instantly strikes dead those that breathe it, and consumes them inwardly to ashes."—*Col. Campbell.*

b Joel ii. 2.

c J. Foster.

r. 14. *J. Craig*, ii. 383; *Dr. S. Charters*, ii. 437; *W. Richardson*, ii. 210; *J. Jowett*, 22.

d Ez. Hopkins.

49. (14) **vain thoughts**, thoughts of security in the service of vain idols. Or ref. may be to their confidence in Egypt.

Vain thoughts (*v.* 14).—I. The characteristics of vain thoughts. 1. Cannot reap any good from them; 2. They cannot associate with good and useful thoughts; 3. Must be driven out to attend to serious matters: 4. They dwell largely and habitually on trifles; 5. They trifle with important things; 6. They are fickle; 7. Those pertinaciously fixed upon an unworthy object; 8. Will again and again return to it; 9. Such as are on speculative fancies; 10. Those bent on schemes of worldly felicity. II. The correctives of vain thoughts. 1. The substantial state of the mind must be cured of vanity; 2. We should have specific subjects of serious interest to employ thought; 3. Self-detection in the act of sin; 4. Recourse to acts of devotion; 5. Practical employment; 6. Communion with thoughts of wise and good.[c]

Vain thoughts.—A true Christian, who, by experience, knows what it is to deal with his own heart, finds it infinitely more difficult to beat down one sinful thought from rising up in him than to keep a thousand sinful thoughts from breaking forth into open act. Here lies his chief labour, to fight against phantasm and any apparitions, such as thoughts are; he sets himself chiefly against these heart-sins, because he knows that these are the sins that are most of all contrary to grace, and do most of all weaken and waste grace. Outward sins are but like so many caterpillars that devour the verdure and flourishing of grace; but heart-sins are like so many worms that gnaw the very root of grace.[d]

15—18. (15) **Dan**, the border-town of Palestine on the north. **mount Ephraim**, on the march towards Jerusalem. The northern boundary of the kingdom of Judæa. (16) **watchers**,[a] or besiegers. (17) **keepers of a field**, who watch to frighten away the wild beasts. (18) **this .. wickedness**, this final siege is the issue of thy wickedness.

Bitterness of sin (*v.* 18).—I. Sin is bitter. 1. It is so comparatively; 2. Absolutely. II. It reaches to thine heart. 1. It defiles it; 2. It disquiets it; 3. It ruins and damns it. Apply:—(1) Since sin is bitter, bitter remedies must be taken; (2) It is a mercy that grace reaches to the heart as well as sin.[b]

Note on v. 17.—In Arabia, and probably in other parts of the East, instead of a solitary watchman in the middle of the plantation, they place guards at certain distances round the whole field, increasing or diminishing their numbers according to the supposed danger. This custom furnishes a clear and easy explanation of a passage in the prophecies of Jeremiah, where he solemnly warns his people of their approaching calamities: "As keepers of a field, are they against her round about: because she hath been rebellious against Me, saith the Lord."[c] Fields in the East have not fences to keep off cattle and other marauders, but only low embankments: hence, were there not keepers, they would be exposed to all kinds of depredations. These men wander about the ridges, or spend their time in platting baskets or pouches for areca-nuts and betel leaf, or tend a few sheep. At night they sleep in a small stall, about six feet by four, which stands on four legs, and is thatched with leaves. The whole affair is so light, that it can be removed in its complete state to any other part by two men; or be taken to pieces in a few minutes,

a "Scouts to warn men of the approach of an enemy. Here the Prophet, by way of irony, calls the Chaldæan army by that name."—*Lowth.*

b Beddome.

Calls to repentance come in the thunder's roar, in the lightning's flash, from the shining stars, from the rolling earth, from the fading flower, from the churchyard stones, from the funeral-train; they come on every birthday, on every sick day, with every sorrow, with every mercy, persistently calling "Repent."

c Paxton.

and removed and put together by one man. The frail fabric illustrates the "lodge in a garden of cucumbers." [d]

19—22. (19) **bowels**, regarded as the seat of emotion. Most deeply is the Prophet moved by his vision of the coming woes of the land. **are pained**, or writhe in pain. **maketh a noise**, of moaning.[a] (20) **destruction**, *etc.*, or complete, utter destruction. **tents . . curtains**, poetical for the dwellings. (21) **standard**, *vv.* 5, 6. (22) **wise . . evil**, "they have studied all the arts of sin and wickedness, but are perfect strangers to the obligations of religion and virtue." [b]

The miseries of war (*v.* 19).—In the contemplation of war—I. What should be our feelings? We should view it—1. As a calamity endured: 2. As a judgment inflicted. II. What should be our conduct? Make the inquiry in regard—1. To ministers; 2. To people. Address—(1) The careless; (2) The self-confident; (3) The mourners.[c]

23—26. (23) **I beheld**, "in this, and the following *vv.*, the Prophet sees in vision the desolate condition of Judæa during the Babylonish captivity." [a] The imagery is highly poetical. **form and void**, Ge. i. 1. (24) **moved lightly**, or as light things, being tossed by the earthquake. (25) **birds . . fled**, &c. in the desolate land they could not find their food. (26) **fruitful place**, or the Carmel (ch. ii. 7).

Sin, its wide consequences.—Sages of old contended that no sin was ever committed whose consequences rested on the head of the sinner alone; that no man could do ill and his fellows not suffer. They illustrated it thus: "A vessel sailing from Joppa carried a passenger who, beneath his berth, cut a hole through the ship's side. When the men of the watch expostulated with him, "What doest thou, O miserable man?" the offender calmly replied, "What matters it to you? The hole I have made lies under my own berth." This ancient parable is worthy of the utmost consideration. No man perishes alone in his iniquity; no man can guess the full consequences of his transgressions. [b]

27—31. (27) **thus**, Jeremiah now puts the message into plainer language. **full end**, or final destruction. There was hope and promise even in the Bab. captivity. (28) **not repent**, &c. the iniquity of Judah could now only be met by judgments. The time for repentance is conceived as gone. (29) **horsemen**, *etc.*, the cavalry and archers of Chaldæa. (30) **clothest . . gold**, intimating the utter uselessness of all attempts to gain the favour and mercy of the conqueror. **rentest thy face**, or enlargest thine eyes with stibium.[a] (31) **woe is me**, for the hopelessness of the calamity.

Painting the eyes.—Almost all writers and travellers in the East afford us proof of the unchanging character of Oriental fashions. A gentleman, describing his visit to a Jewish family in Damascus, says: "They were rich, stylish people, consequently we may conclude that their dress and ornaments were consistent with all that was thought proper or fashionable. The gentlemen of the family being from home, the ladies received me in a handsome apartment, with the utmost courtesy and kindness. The ceiling and walls of the room were highly ornamented with painting and gilding; the walls similarly decorated and hung with looking-glasses. The dress of the ladies was splendid: they

d Roberts.

a Twice applied, as here, to the low moaning of persons in grief, Is. xvi. 11; Jer. xlviii. 36.

b "The repetitious clauses of this *v.* are designed to give greater force to the sentiment conveyed in it." —*Henderson.*

c C. Simeon, M.A. v. 19. *Dr. T. Horton*, 359. *v.* 22. *Dr. V. Knox*, vi. 253.

a Spk. Com.

b Spurgeon.

"The efforts of men to explain the origin of sin, this throws no more light upon it than a candle upon a widely extended landscape veiled in mists, and wrapped in midnight darkness." —*Dr. Guthrie.*

a "The use of their paint was to contract the eyelids, and make their eyes appear more large and full, which they thought a great beauty."—*Lowth.*

v. 31. *S. Smith*, i. 325.

"Her eyes, sparkling with great ire, resembled properly two stars of the night, that shoot forth their brightness upon the earth when all things be in silence."—*William Painter.*

"The eye takes in at once the landscape of the world at a small inlet which a grain might close, and half creates the wondrous world we see."—*Young.*

wore loose Eastern robes of silk, stomachers covered with gold, and jewelled ornaments on their heads. But one decoration attracted my attention from all the others, and seemed to my unaccustomed eyes to mar their beauty in a high degree. From the outer corner of each eye a black line was painted upon the cheek, which gave exactly the appearance of two slits or rents. Now you will no longer be at a loss to understand what was the singular custom alluded to by Jeremiah, of which there can be little doubt that this fact affords an interesting illustration."

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1, 2. (1) **run,** *etc.*, this is a strong figure, and not to be pressed with absolute literalness. There were some godly men, but Jeremiah refers to the mass of the people, or more particularly to the leaders of the people. **find a man,** *i.e.* one worthy of the name.[a] There was a general corruption of manners. **executeth,** in the sense of "carries out into practice." **truth,** or probity. **it,** *i.e.* Jerusalem. Comp. Ge. xviii. 32. (2) **swear falsely,** though not by false gods, they swear in a false, deceptive spirit. They were hypocrites when not idolaters, *see v.* 7.

Right kind of men (*v.* 1).—I. That in the estimation of God the true excellence of man is moral and religious. 1. A strict obedience to the Divine will as far as it is known; 2. An earnest endeavour to attain an accurate acquaintance with the Divine word. II. That there are states of society in which men of this description are exceedingly rare. 1. They may be removed by death; 2. They may be withdrawn into concealment; 3. They may be reduced in numbers by the progress of degeneracy. III. That in the worst states of society such men are very valuable. 1. They avert Divine judgments; 2. Draw down Divine blessings; 3. Promote the work of reformation.[b]

Streets in Jerusalem.—In Jerusalem there are no right names for streets, just as in Alexandria and Cairo. Hence the difficulty of directing any one to a house or place. In Malta the British Government have remedied this with great care, by affixing, in large letters, its name to every street, just as in London or Edinburgh. In ancient times the streets of Jerusalem seem to have had their names; and it is worth our while to notice how many of these are mentioned in Scripture. There was the Bakers' Street, from which King Zedekiah ordered Jeremiah's food to be sent to him (Jer. xxxvii. 21). There was "East Street," into which Hezekiah gathered the priests and Levites, when exhorting them to cleanse the house, and to carry forth the filthiness that had been allowed to lie there in heaps in the reign of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxix. 4). There was the "Street of the House of God," into which the men of Judah and Benjamin came together in the days of Ezra (Ezra x. 9). There was the "Water-gate Street," where the people came together in the days of Nehemiah (Neh. viii. 1, 3, 16). There was "Ephraim-gate Street," where they met to celebrate the feast of tabernacles (Neh. viii. 16). Nor were these streets few, for Jeremiah, when warning Israel against the increase of her false gods, says, "According to the number of the streets of

a Comp. the search of Diogenes the Cynic in the streets of Athens.

"The true sense of this passage is that Josiah's reforms were frustrated by the immorality prevalent among all classes; which, though checked for a time, yet was too deeply ingrained to be really eradicated by all that good king could do."—*Spk. Com.*

b G. Brooks.

v. 1. *W. Reading*, ii. 469; *J. Smith*, ii. 270; *A. Roberts*, v. i.

v. 2. *Dr. Hammond*, iv. 601.

"There are some men who, like pictures, would be perfect in their moral characters were it not for some blemish which you discover on the *eye*, or the *ear*, or the *mouth*, or some other part of the exposed person."—*John Bate.*

Actions, looks, words, steps, form the alphabet by which you may spell character."—*Lavater.*

Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing," Jer. xi. 13. In the days of that Prophet the idolatry seems to have been more open than before, and the public streets were the place where altars and idols were set up. Hence there are more allusions to the "streets of Jerusalem" in his prophecies than in all the other Prophets together (Jer. v. 1, vii. 17, 34, ix. 21, xi. 6, 13, xiv. 16, xxxiii. 10, xliv. 6, 9, 21). He was specially the prophet of the streets, the "out-door" preacher; and he was thus brought more keenly and frequently into collision with the inhabitants than any of his "fellow-servants the Prophets."[c]

"When I am a man," is the poetry of childhood. "When I was young," is the poetry of old age.

c *Christian Treas.*

3—6. (3) eyes . . truth, *i.e.* upon the sincerity of religious profession; upon the heart. God is the God of truth;[a] and desireth truth in the inward parts. stricken, with chastisements that were designed for correction.[b] faces . . rock, fig. for an obstinate unwillingness to receive Divine instruction. (4) poor, *etc.*,[c] they must belong to those classes which, in all ages, are found least susceptible of religious impressions. (5) great men, men of education and position. these . . bonds, among them he found nothing but the most lawless profligacy.[d] (6) evenings, or deserts. Three of the wildest animals are here taken to represent the Babylonians, who were to punish the wilful and wicked nation.

Unsanctified affliction (*v.* 3).—I. Some of the forms of unsanctified affliction. 1. Insensibility; 2. Hardihood. II. Some of the means by which this evil may be kept away. 1. By seeking to ascertain and to accomplish the design of our affliction; 2. By repressing every tendency to murmuring or impatience; 3. By avoiding immoderate sorrow.[e]

The lion.—The lion prowls about in the day, which I have often witnessed in Africa: but the habits of the wolf are different, as it seldom makes its appearance before sunset, after which it comes forth, like other thieves of the night, in search of prey. I never, when moving about in Africa, saw more than one wolf stalking about in daylight, and that was in a most forsaken part, where, to a great extent, the land was absolutely paved with flag-stones, the same as the side pavements in our streets; but when night came they were constantly howling and hovering around our encampment. The habit of the leopard, also, is to be slumbering in concealment during the day; but the darkness rouses him, and he comes forth seeking what he may devour. It is of the tiger species, and rather smaller. The wolves and leopards have the boldness to prowl about their cities, as the wild beasts did about our wagons in the wilderness, so that it should be most hazardous for man or beast to venture outside their walls![f]—*The wolf.*—The rapacious character of the wolf was familiarly known to the ancients, for both the Greek and Latin poets frequently mention it. In the first book of the Georgics, Virgil says, this office was given to the wolf by Jupiter, to hunt the prey. "The rapacious wolf" is a phrase which often occurs in the odes of Horace; and Ovid, in one of his Elegies, sings how the wolf, rapacious and greedy of blood, when pressed by famine, plunders the unguarded fold: his ravenous temper prompts him to destructive and sanguinary depredations. He issues forth in the night, traverses the country, and not only kills what is sufficient to satisfy his hunger, but everywhere, unless deterred

a De. xxxii. 4.

b Is. ix. 13; Je. ii. 30.

c "The Prophet supposes that such evil could only exist among the mass of the uninstructed vulgar, and then he goes on to express his hope that he would find things in a very different state among those constituting the higher ranks of society, who had enjoyed superior advantages."—*Henderson.*

d "They bid open defiance to God's laws, and cast off all obligations of duty and conscience; like headstrong oxen that will not be brought under the yoke, but break through any bonds whereby you would restrain them, or bring them under discipline."—*Louth.*

e *G. Brooks.*

f *Campbell.*

v. 3. *Origen, Op.* iii. 163; *Dr. K. Lucas*, iii. 253; *S. Davies*, iii. 151; *Dr. Fothergill*, i. 403; *T. Rennell*, 317.

v. 4. *Dr. & Clarke*, 405.

vv. 4, 5. *Dr. N. Brady*, i. 45; *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 225.

"The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear."—*Socrates.*

"Affliction is the good man's shining scene; prosperity conceals his brightest ray; as night to stars, woe lustre gives to man."—*Young.*

"He went, like one that hath been stunn'd and is of sense forlorn; a sadder and a wiser man he rose the morrow morn."—*Coleridge.*

If "all things work together for good to them that love God," then afflictions must be among the number.

No man has a right to do as he pleases except when he pleases to do right.

g Paxton.

a Je. v. 29, ix. 9, xliv. 22.

v. 8. "The same term is used in the East to denote a similar thing. It is said, 'Listen to that evil man, he is always neighing.' 'O that wicked one, he is like the horse in his frensy.' 'The men of that family are all neighers.' Heathenism is ever true to itself; impurity is its inseparable companion."—*Roberts.*

by the barking of dogs or the vociferation of the shepherds, destroys a whole flock; he roams about the cottages, kills all the animals which have been left without, digs the earth under the doors, enters with a dreadful ferocity, and puts every living creature to death, before he chooses to depart, and carry off his prey. When these inroads happen to be fruitless, he returns to the woods, searches about with avidity, follows the track of wild beasts, and pursues them in the hope that they may be stopped and seized by some other wolf, and that he may be a partaker of the spoil. "To appease hunger," says Buffon, "he swallows indiscriminately everything he can find, corrupted flesh, bones, hair, skins half-tanned and covered with lime;" and Pliny avers that he devours the earth on which he treads, to satisfy his voracious appetite. When his hunger is extreme, he loses the idea of fear; he attacks women and children, and even sometimes darts upon men; till, becoming perfectly furious by excessive exertions, he generally falls a sacrifice to pure rage and distraction. He has been accordingly joined with the lion in executing punishment upon wicked men; and it is evident, from his character and habits, that he is well adapted to the work of judgment: "The great men," said Jeremiah, "have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds; wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them." The rapacious and cruel conduct of the princes of Israel is compared by Ezekiel to the mischievous inroads of the same animal: "Her princes in the midst thereof, are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain." The disposition of the wolf to attack the weaker animals, especially those which are under the protection of man, is alluded to by our Lord in the parable of the hireling shepherd: "The wolf catches them and scatters the flock;" and the Apostle Paul, in his address to the elders of Ephesus, gives the name of this insidious and cruel animal to the false teachers who disturb the peace, and perverted the faith of their people: "I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Ovid gives him the same character in his fable of Lycaon.*g*

7—9. (7) how, or why. What reason can be offered for any expectation of pardon? sworn . . gods, again and again the "swearing" is noticed as a solemn act of religion. fed . . full, supplied them with all good: some, however, trans., "though I bound them to Me by oath." harlots' houses, a strong fig. for idol temples, but, with allusion to the unclean rites of idol worship. (8) fed, *etc.*, Eze. xxii. 11. (9) visit,*a* in severe judgments.

Sin a hindrance to our receiving blessings.—When our spiritual supplies fail, the channel is sometimes at fault, and not the stream; the hindrance to their coming lies with us and not with our heavenly Father. The supply of fuel to our city in midwinter sometimes fails, not because the coal-fields are exhausted, but because the weather has frozen our rivers, detained our colliers in the channel, and blocked up our railways. The supply of water or of gas to our houses is sometimes insufficient, not because the reservoirs are low, but because the pipes which connect our dwellings with the main service are choked up or broken. News fails to reach us, not because our correspondent has neg-

lected to write, but because the means of transmission have been imperfect.[b]

10—13. (10) go ye, an apostrophe addressed to the Babylonians. They were to execute the Divine judgment. full end, final and complete destruction, *v.* 18. not the Lord's, He having withdrawn from their defence, by reason of their iniquities. (11, 12) belied, spoken unworthily and untruthfully of God.[a] (13) word . . then, *i.e.* any word or message from God.[b] thus . . then, "may the evil which the Prophets threaten fall upon their own head."

Vain defences (*v.* 10).—I. The sinner's consciousness of danger. 1. His danger is real; 2. He has a deep-seated apprehension of it. II. His inadequate means of defence. 1. Sometimes in an absolute denial of the moral government of God; 2. In mistaken views of the Divine character; 3. In a false estimate of personal merit or excellence.[c]

14—18. (14) words . . mouth, ch. i. 9. fire . . wood, *i.e.*, the issue of thy words shall be a destruction like the burning of dry wood.[a] (15) from far, Is. xxxix. 3. mighty, or enduring. firm. language . . not,[b] as threatened, De. xxviii. 49. (16) quiver, *see* ch. iv. 29. (17) bread, here put for bread-corn. impoverish, better, pound, or batter with the battering-ram. sword, here in a general sense for the instruments of siege. (18) full end, as *v.* 10, ch. iv. 27.

Rev. Dr. Campbell.—"Is not Mr. B. a deep preacher?" asked a friend of the late Rev. Dr. Campbell, of Aberdeen. "Eh!" replied the doctor, smiling: "I will tell you a story, sir. When I was a boy, I was amusing myself with some other boys in a pool. Some of them were going further in than I was disposed to go, and I was frightened. To a man, who was passing by, I called out, 'Is this pool deep?' 'No, man,' replied he; 'it is only muddy.' There is such a thing as preaching the deep things of God, which will be neither understood nor relished by the natural man. But it is very possible to preach the plain truths of the Gospel, in a language and style which at once clothe them with mystery, and expose them to ridicule. It ought never to be forgotten that the Gospel is a revelation; and that it is by manifestation of the truth that the preacher is to commend himself to every man's conscience. I have heard of a minister discussing the unrevealed glories of Christ. This may be deep preaching; I am sure it must be very nonsensical and unprofitable."[c]

19—24. (19) like as, *etc.*, retribution has come upon thee, retribution in kind.[a] They had given themselves up to worship foreign idols, they should now be given up to serve foreign masters. (20, 21) declare this, proclaim it publicly. (22) sand . . decree,[b] Job xxxviii. 10, 11; Ps. civ. 9. (23) heart, or disposition, will.[c] (24) fear, in the religious sense of "worship." giveth rain, *etc.*, comp. Ps. cxlvii. 8; Mat. v. 45; Ac. xiv. 17. weeks . . harvest, the seven weeks intervening bet. the Passover and Pentecost, dating fr. the 16th day of Nisan.

Indifference (*v.* 21).—I. What God has done to produce pious consideration. 1. He has given powers of mind adapted to it; 2. He has given us the means to answer to these powers: 3. His Holy Spirit to strive, convince, etc. II. The indifference men

b S. Martin.

a "They denied the Divine government over human affairs; ascribing His judgments to chance or fortune, and disbelieving all threatenings of sword or famine which the Prophets have denounced in His name, wh. is, in effect, to give Him the lie."—*Lowth.*
b Ho. i. 2.
c G. Brooks.

a "Thy denunciations of judgment shall all be fulfilled, and shall consume them as fire does wood."—*Fausset.*
b "This would render them more pitiless, as they would not understand their cries for mercy."—*Spk. Com.*

"Our actions are our own; their consequences belong to heaven."—*Francis.*

"Our best light must be made life, and our best thought, action."—*S. Smiles.*

c R. T. S.

a "All God's promises were made upon condition of your obedience, and if you forsake God, you are not to expect that the promise of dwelling in this land should be made good to you any longer."—*Lowth.*

b "Modern science has shown that the resisting power of sand is

enormous. By the mechanical laws wh. govern it the shock of a blow is distributed laterally, and produces little effect. A wave wh. would shatter rocks falls powerless upon sand." —*Spk. Com.*

c De. xxi. 18, 20.

d Dr. Burns.

often exhibit. 1. Of some it is total, without any concern ; 2. Of others considerate only of the externals of religion ; 3. Of some only to the intellectual parts of truth : 4. Of others only occasional. III. The consequences of this indifference. 1. It is extremely foolish ; 2. Detrimental to the soul ; 3. Specially offensive to God ; 4. Must end in the soul's ruin. Apply :—(1) Examine and test yourselves ; (2) Seek the quickening influences of the Spirit ; (3) Be resolved and wise, and now, lest you perish for ever.*d*

25—28. (25) **iniquities**, *etc.*, ch. iii. 3. (26) **lay wait**, or "pry as fowlers lie in wait."*a* (27) **cage**, or basket coop full of birds that have been caught. **full of deceit**, *i.e.* of treasures acquired by fraud. (28) **fat**, De. xxxii. 15. **overpass**, surpass in wickedness even the wicked.

National delinquency (*v.* 25).—Notice the chief of our national sins. 1. Ungodliness ; 2. Immorality ; 3. General indifference to the truth. Apply :—(1) Lay it to heart personally ; (2) Pray for your country.*b*

29—31. (29) **not visit**, *v.* 9. (30) **wonderful**, or a thing exciting amazement and terror. (31) **by their means**, according to the guidance and directions of these false prophets. **love to have it so**, prefer the license wh. such false teachings give.*a* Mi. ii. 11.

What will ye do in the end? (*v.* 31).—I. There is an end to every evil course—a termination, and a result which God foreknows as a certain termination, and as an inevitable result, if an evil course be persisted in and persevered in. II. The end is not far distant ; it draws nigh. III. The proximate end of some things is already realised, and the end of other things is beginning to appear. IV. Some of our fellows are, under our eye, realising the proximate end of many of their evil ways ; while others, by looking to the end, have forsaken their evil ways. Appeal to different characters, as the hypocrite, the neglecter of salvation, to the criminal, etc.*b*

a "In metaphors taken fr. birdcatchers, the Prophet describes the cunning of the more abandoned part of the nation, and the great wealth wh. they had unjustly acquired."—*Henderson.*

b J. J. Cort, M.A.

a "Both priests and prophets agree to speak pleasing things to the people, thereby to keep up their interest and authority with them ; and what can this end in but a total corruption of manners ? the consequence of wh. must be utter ruin and destruction."—*Lowth.*

b S. Martin.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—5. (1) **of Benjamin**, a name for Jerusalem, as situated partly within the limits of this tribe. Jeremiah was himself a Benjamite. **Tekoa**, 11 m. S. of Jerusalem. The south was the only road open to those who would escape. **Beth-haccerem**, Ne. iii. 14.*a* (2) **comely**, *etc.*, or, to a luxuriant pasturage. (3) **shepherds**, *etc.*, another fig. for the consuming Babylonians, who should feed upon this pasture. (4) **at noon**, the usual resting time : but, in their eagerness, the Chaldæans would advance even at noon. **woe**, *etc.*, the expression of the impatient soldiers.*b* (5) **go by night**, *i.e.* the soldiers clamour for a night assault.

The circling seasons of the year (*v.* 4).—1. There are times when serious thoughts will crowd into the mind ; 2. For who can see things change and depart without regret ? 3. But yet the fuller beauties of summer succeed to those of spring : 4. It would seem that autumns have produced similar feelings in the minds of inspired writers ; 5. Scenes of autumnal decay speak to those who are in the summer of their life ; 6. The autumn of

a "Every one knows that Jerusalem is situated in the tribe of Benjamin. As for Tekoa, we see every day with our own eyes that it is a little town upon a hill about twelve (Roman) miles from Jerusalem. Between these is another village, called in the Heb. and Syr. tongues, *Beth-acharmi*, which also is placed upon a hill."—*S. Jerome.*

b "The generals, more prudent

life is approaching ; 7. When the evening is come night is not far off ; when autumn is with us winter is at hand.[c]

Note on v. 1—*Fire signals.*—Fire signs are used as a telegraph in some parts of the South Seas. A native of Tanna, in giving me the news one morning. said, "There will be a party over from the island of Aneiteum to-day or to-morrow." "How do you know?" "Because we saw a great bonfire rising there last night." The natives of heathen islands are also in the habit of kindling fires, as a smoke signal, to attract the notice of a vessel which may be off their shore. Sometimes when we are wondering whether there are any natives among the dense bush which we see from the ship, up goes a column of smoke, and removes all doubt.[d]—*Note on v.* 2.—A passage of D'Arvieux will account for that surprise which he supposes the daughters of Jerusalem would notwithstanding feel, upon seeing the swarthiness of the person which Solomon had chosen for his spouse, as it shows the attention usually paid by the great men of the East to the complexion of their wives, as well as the great tanning power of the sun in Palestine. "The princesses, and the other Arab ladies, whom they showed me from a private place of the tent, appeared to me beautiful and well shaped ; one may judge by these, and by what they told me of them, that the rest are no less so ; they are very fair, because they are always kept from the sun. The women in common are extremely sunburnt, besides the brown and swarthy colour which they naturally have," etc. Naturally, he says, though this most permanent swarthiness must arise from the same cause with that temporary tanning he speaks of, or otherwise the Arab princesses would have been swarthy, though not sunburnt, being natives of the country, which yet, he affirms, they were not. It is on this account, without doubt, that the Prophet Jeremiah, when he would describe a comely woman, describes her by the character of one that dwelleth at home. The delicate, and those that are solicitous to preserve their beauty, go very little abroad : it seems it was so anciently, and therefore the Prophet uses a term to express a woman of beauty, which would not be very applicable to many British fine ladies.[e]

than the troops, d lay the assault till the next morning, the usual time for such an enterprise."—*Syk. Com.*

c H. Whitehead, M.A.

"In Beth-haccerem there might possibly be a very high tower. Kimchi observes that the word signifies a high tower, for the keepers of the vines to watch in. If it were so, it was a very proper place to set up the sign of fire in, to give notice to all the surrounding country. It was usual with the Persians, Grecians, and Romans, to signify in the night by signs of fire, and by burning torches, either the approach of an enemy, or succour from friends. The former was done by shaking and moving their torches ; the latter by holding them still."—*Burder.*

d Dr. Turner.

e Harmer.

6—8. (6) **cast a mount**, marg. "pour out the engine of shot."[a] The fig. of pouring has reference to the emptying of the baskets of earth wh. were brought to make the mound. (7) **grief**, *etc.*, the groan of those suffering by reason of the wickedness wh. calls for these judgments. (8) **instructed**, or learn the lessons of thy chastisement. **my soul**, or I Myself : "lest My mind and affection be utterly alienated from thee."

A solemn admonition (*v.* 8).—I. The benefits of instruction in national danger. II. The destructive consequences of this instruction being sent in vain. Apply—1. To the man who rests in the mere external observances of a public fast ; 2. To those who are desirous of instruction.[b]

a Comp. 2 Sa. xx. 15 ; Isa. xxxvii. 33 ; Je. xxxii. 24, xxxiii. 4 ; Eze. xvii. 17.

b R. Cecil, M.A. v. 8. *Dr. B. Whichcote*, i. 177 ; *Abp. Tillotson*, iii. 53 ; *R. Camell*, 43 ; *T. Skeeler*, 125 ; *P. Menchon.* ix. 276 ; *J. T. Robinson*, 111 ; *R. C. Cox*, 342.

9—12. (9) **turn back**, or go over the vineyard again to be quite sure no stray grapes are left.[a] **into the baskets**, better, "upon the tendrils." (10) **ear is uncircumcised**, ch. vii. 26 : Ac. vii. 51. "Closed against the precepts of God by carnality." **reproach**, they turn it into ridicule. (11) **weary with holding in**, and must utter my denunciations, wh. shall reach all

a Comp. Is. xvii. 6, xxiv. 13.

v. 10. *J. Hyatt*, 274.

"How wretched a spectacle is a garden into which cloven-footed beasts have entered! That which yesterday was fragrant, and shone all over with crowded beauty, is to-day rooted, despoiled, trampled, and utterly devoured; and all over the ground you shall find but the rejected cuds of flowers and leaves and forms that have been champed for their juices and then rejected. Such to me is the Bible, when the pragmatic propheey-monger and the swinish utilitarian have toothed its fruits and crauncheed its blossoms."—*Beecher.*

"The motives of the best actions will not bear too strict an inquiry. It is allowed that the cause of most actions, good or bad, may be resolved into the love of ourselves: but the self-love of some men inclines them to please others; and the self-love of others is wholly employed in pleasing themselves. This makes the great distinction between virtue and vice."—*Swift.*

classes, young, middle-aged, and old. full of days, *i.e.* who have lived to the full term and period of human life. (12) houses . . others, De. xxviii. 30.

Courage for God rewarded.—A traveller relates the following incident:—"Some time since, I was travelling in Switzerland. On the close of a brilliant day I was anxious to see the last rays of the setting sun. I mounted a hill, and, struck with admiration at the glorious colouring around me. I longed for a companion to unite with me in praising the Sun of righteousness thus visible in the beauties of creation. A distant whistle from a peasant returning to his home quickened my steps, but his speed fast exceeded mine, and he was quickly out of sight. The rosy tints were also fading, giving place to the deep shadows of evening. As I descended the height, I walked close to a hedge which bordered a deep ravine. The sound of voices from beneath arrested my attention; and looking through the bushes, I beheld a body of men, wearing the appearance of bánditti, at their evening meal. Here, I thought, is an opportunity of making known the plan of salvation; but my timid, bashful nature suggested the temerity of such an effort. One so totally defenceless as I was could not be called upon to face such a gang; so I moved on slowly, still listening to their rough language. Dissatisfied with my own cowardice, I went near an opening in the hedge to take another view; my foot trod upon unsafe ground, and I came down with the crumbling earth into the midst of the dreaded party. I now felt God had decided for me, and realised the truth of the following lines:—

"'Let faith suppress each rising fear,
Each anxious doubt exclude;
Thy Maker's will has placed thee here,
A Maker wise and good.'

"'A booty! a booty!' shouted the marauders. With a strength not my own, I echoed, with an undaunted voice, 'A booty! a booty such as you have never received before!' An unpleasant expression passed over their faces. I heeded it not, feeling assured I was God's ambassador. 'Yes,' I exclaimed, 'I bring you good news—glorious news, of a powerful Friend who is able and willing to save both body and soul.' A tall, dark-featured man took up my words. 'Save my soul? No one has ever cared for my soul: I have been a castaway from my birth.' Opening my pocket Bible, I repeated from memory—for there was no other light but such as the starry firmament gave—suitable invitations, exhortations, and promises. Oh! how quick and powerful is the word of God, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, imparting light, life, and hope! Finding the attention of my hearers riveted, I concluded with this verse:—'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' With heartfelt pleasure I heard a union of voices cry out, 'Let us shake hands upon that!' 'Let us also,' I said, 'go to the Fountain of all strength, and ask God to confirm our resolutions.' They unanimously knelt down under the blue vault of heaven. Upon rising, the dark-featured man begged a favour of me—'Will you give me your Bible?' 'Will you promise,' I asked, 'to read it with prayer?' 'I will,' he answered. Three years after this interview I was accosted by a respectable-looking man

in Piccadilly. 'Excuse the liberty of the inquiry, sir. Have you visited such a canton, in Switzerland, in such a year? And do you recognise this book?' producing from his pocket my well-worn Bible. Answering in the affirmative, he then grasped my hand, and said, 'This gift has been blessed to my soul: and often have I prayed that I might meet you on earth to thank you for this inestimable boon.'"

"Cast down thyself, and only strive to raise
The glory of thy Maker's sacred name.
Use all thy power that blessed Power to raise,
Which gives the power to be, and use the same."
—HERBERT.[b]

13—17. (13) to covetousness, or gaining gains,[a] the acquisition of exorbitant or unjust gains. falsely, or fraudulently. (14) slightly, only making a surface-healing, without reaching the deep cause. daughter . . people, the poetic name for Jerusalem. saying, peace, this would be the hope based on Josiah's reforms.[b] (15) were they ashamed, a people is in a terrible condition when it is past feeling shame. (16) old paths, the neglected and despised ways of allegiance to Jehovah, and obedience to His will.[c] (17) watchmen, the Prophets.

The old paths (*v.* 16).—The figure: travellers and their guides. I. The denomination, "old paths." 1. Because ordained from eternity; 2. Because herein all the saints have walked; 3. Because tried. II. The description, "good way." A way is good—1. When safe; 2. When direct; 3. When frequented; 4. When pleasant; 5. When firm and passable. III. The directions, "stand, etc." 1. They who seek this path should be cautious in their observations; 2. They must be earnest in their inquiries; 3. They should be prompt in entering thereon. IV. The destination, "rest." 1. On the journey, contentment, satisfaction, etc; 2. Afterwards eternal repose.[d]

18—20. (18) congregation, or general assembly of mankind. (19) O earth, the appeal being even to nature to listen to God's charge against His people. (20) to what purpose,[a] or what is the value of any external ceremonies, when the heart is not in them? Sheba, a part of Arabia Felix, famous for its spices. sweet cane,[b] Is. xliii. 24. burnt offerings, which *should* testify to an entire devotion to My service, but do not.

Note on v. 20.—The sweet-smelling reed grows in the deserts of Arabia. It is gathered near Jambo, a port town of Arabia Petræa, from whence it is brought into Egypt. Pliny says it is common to India and Syria. This plant was probably among the number of those which the Queen of Sheba presented to Solomon; and what seems to confirm the opinion is, that it is still very much esteemed by the Arabs on account of its fragrance. It is likely the sweet cane of Jeremiah, who calls it prime, or excellent, and associates it with incense from Sheba. "To what purpose cometh there to Me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country?" And, in allusion to the same plant, Isaiah complains in the name of Jehovah, "Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money." In the Book of Exodus it is called "sweet calamus," and is said to come "from a far country;" which agrees with the declaration of ancient writers, that the best is brought from India.[c]

"The flighty purpose never is o'ertook, unless the deed go with it; from this moment the very firstlings of my heart shall be the firstlings of my hand." — *Shakespeare.*

b *Churchman's Penny Mag.*

a Is. lvi. 11; Je. viii. 10.

b "They have used only *lenitives*, as if a surgeon should slightly skin over a sore that festers underneath."—*Leath.*

c "Your country was once prosperous and blessed. Try to learn what were the paths trodden in those days by your ancestors. Discover what the good path was which led them to happiness. See whether it was the path of idolatry, of moral corruption, of private greed; or the path of true religion, of purity of life, of self-sacrifice." — *Spk. Com.*

d *Stems and Twigs.*

a Is. i. 11, lxvi. 3; Am. v. 21; Mi. vi. 6.

"The oracle of Jupiter Hammon gave this answer to the Athenians, 'I am better pleased with the prayer of the Lacedemonians than with all the oblations of the Greeks.'"—*Plato.*

b Ex. xxx. 23.

v. 19. *W. J. E. Bennett*, 291.

c *Paxton.*

21—25. (21) **stumblingblocks**, or causes of stumbling.[a] Perhaps ref. is to the Babylonians, as causes of the fall of the nation. (22) **sides . . earth**, or remotest regions of the earth.[b] (23) **spear**, or javelin: comp. the Zulu *assegai*. **voice roareth**, Is. xvii. 12, 13. **horses**. ch. iv. 13. (24) **fame**, report of the prowess and might of the Chaldæans. **hands . . feeble**, so that we cannot hold our weapons. (25) **every side**, there is danger all around.

Duffla war prayer.—According to the *Delhi Gazette*, the Dufflas are in an uncomfortable state of mind about our approaching expedition into their country. A big-sounding war prayer has been drawn up by the local pope, who has enjoined all true Dufflas to repeat it twice a day. Among other things they are to pray: "Let their coasts be ruled by us! Let the demons of their forts be given to those of ours! Let the soul of him who is the chief cause of this quarrel be bound by that of our friend and chief, whom he has injured! Let the properties of their country be received by us! Let their warriors be seized by us; for which reason make strong all our warriors, that they may bind the spirits of all their able men for us to destroy them! Give us such help that they may not stand or hold, and that they be rendered insane and made to tremble! Come, our principal god, who art great, and powerful, and old, and whose words are always obeyed, destroy all our enemies, with all they possess, even that which is upon their backs! Let owls scream on their houses! Let all venomous reptiles scramble up the posts of their houses, and frighten them with terrific noises! Let fierce dogs, wild elephants, and ferocious tigers terrify them, so that they scratch each other's faces and tear their own hair! Let the rainbow drink up the water of their wells, and tanks, and rivers! Let a powerful tempest sweep them away! Come, spirits of our warriors, of our ancestors, seize the spirits of our enemies! Come, spirits of our great-grandmothers, with the demons of this powerful country, by whom we are governed, and whose eyes, and ears, and nostrils are ever open towards us!"[c]

26—30. (26) **gird**, *etc.*, as ch. iii. 25.[a] **wallow . . ashes**, the sign of wildness of grief. **only son**, Am. viii. 10: Zec. xii. 10. **spoiler**, *i.e.* Nebuchadnezzar. (27) **tower**, or watchman in a tower, to notice the people's ways. (28) **brass and iron**, "their impudence resembles brass, and their obstinacy may be compared to iron."[b] (29) **burned**, or snort, blow furiously. But these metals will not be refined even in intense fires of chastisement.[c] (30) **reprobate**, or refuse; only dross, with no basis of good metal.[d]

The battle-field.—

Beyond Busaco's mountains dun,
When far had roll'd the sultry sun,
And night her pall of gloom had thrown
O'er Nature's still convexity;

High on the heath our tents were spread,
The cold turf was our cheerless bed,
And o'er the hero's dew-chill'd head
The banners flapp'd incessantly.

a "When God says He lays stumbling-blocks in men's way, we must remember that it is by the general action of His moral law, by which wilful sin in one point reacts upon the whole moral nature."—*Spk. Com.*

b Is. xiv. 13.

"When a person is hungry, or weary, or when he hears bad news, it is said, 'His hands have become weak,' 'His hands have turned cold.'"—*Roberts.*

"Most wretched men are cradled into poetry by wrong: they learn in suffering what they teach in song."—*Shelley.*

"Only the actions of the just smell sweet, and blossom in the dust."—*Shirley.*

c Newspaper.

a Mi. i. 10.

b Lowth.

c Pr. xvii. 3; Isa. i. 25; Zec. xiii. 9; Mal. iii. 2, 3; 1 Pe. i. 7.

d "They have rejected all God's gifts and motives for their repentance, and therefore Jehovah has rejected them as an alloy too utterly adulterate to repay the refiner's toil."—*Spk. Com.*

"As we see one coal kindle another, and wood to be apt matter

The loud war-trumpet woke the morn,
The quivering drum, the pealing horn ;
From rank to rank the cry is borne,
"Arouse for death or victory !"

The orb of day, in crimson dye,
Began to mount the morning sky ;
Then, what a sight for warrior's eye
Hung on the bold declivity !

The serried bay'nets glittering stood,
Like icicles on hills of blood ;
An aerial stream, a silver wood,
Reel'd in the flickering canopy.

Like waves of ocean rolling fast,
Or thunder-cloud before the blast,
Massena's legions, stern and vast,
Rush'd to the dreadful revelry.

The pause is o'er : the fatal shock
A thousand thousand thunders woke ;
The air grows sick ; the mountains rock :
Red Ruin rides triumphantly.[e]

to make a fire; so those that are disposed to contention and brawling are apt to kindle strife." —*Caudray.*

"As we avoid fighting dogs, lest we be caught by the shins; even so are we to avoid troublesome spirits, that are ready to wrangle about every trifle."—*Caudray.*

"The next dreadful thing to a battle lost is a battle won."—*Duke of Wellington.*

e Hogg.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1—4. (1) **word**, a new prophecy, or denunciation. (2) **gate**, either the principal gate on the east side of the temple ; or the gate of the court of Israel : prob. the latter. (3) **amend . . doings**, Zec. i. 6. "*ways* or habits, *doings* the separate actions upon which the formation of habits depends." **cause you**, or permit you. (4) **lying words**, such as deceive. **temple . . these**, the repetition emphasises their confidence. Being the temple and service of Jehovah, they intimated that it would never be destroyed. God would surely protect it.[a]

"*Sir, is your soul saved ?*"—Some years ago an officer in the army, being in Richmond, Surrey, met a young chimney-sweep, who, looking him in the face, said point-blank and suddenly, as if he were a sentry giving him a challenge, "Sir, is your soul saved ?" The soldier was not ready with a direct reply. The sudden and strange way in which the question had been put by the sooty-faced lad, who stood before him waiting the answer, was enough to take him aback. But that was not all. He was not quite sure whether the boy was serious, or was only seeking fun in a new and odd way ; and, above all other reasons for his hesitation was this, that in truth he dare not say "Yes !" and did not like to say "No !" So he resorted to the convenient device of questioning his querist instead of answering him, and said to the lad, "Is yours ?" Seriously, and without pausing, he replied as follows : "I thank God, sir, I believe it is : and I have no doubt that, if I were to die, I should go to heaven." After a few more words the two went on their way. The soldier turned into the park with his heart full of solemn feeling ; for to himself at least he had been compelled to answer the boy's question. It had thrust upon his attention a fact of the utmost importance—that he dare not say, "I am saved." He walked, thought, prayed,

a The Jews supposed that bec. the temple was dedicated to Jehovah, He, as their tutelar God, would effectually protect it, and all who came to worship in it."—*Henderson.*

v. 2. *W. Fenn*, 82.

v. 3. *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 168 ; *T. Hobbes*, 53.

v. 4. *Dr. R. Moss*, v. 147 ; *J. Dodson*, 371 ; *Bp. Kaye*, 491 ; *G. Currey, Huls. Lec.* 121.

"Lais broke her looking-glass because it showed the wrinkles on her face. Many men are angry with them that tell them their faults, when they should be angry only with the faults that are told them."—*Venning.*

resolved, and ere very long obtained, through faith, the blessing of a conscious salvation.

5—7. (5) throughly, sincerely, and heartily. man .. neighbour, *i.e.* one with another. (6) oppress not, *etc.*, comp. ch. v. 28; De. xiv. 29, xxiv. 19—21. These would be the true signs of an earnest and thorough reformation. (7) dwell, permanently and securely. ever and ever, *from eternity to eternity:* "the strongest formula by which perpetuity of duration is expressed in Hebrew." [a]

State of the world.—The world is a great hospital, full of sick and dying souls, all wounded by one and the same mortal weapon —sin. Some are senseless of their misery, feel not their pains, value not a physician. Others are full of sense, as well as danger, mourn under their condition, and sadly bewail it. The merciful God hath, in His abundant compassion to the perishing world, sent a Physician from heaven, and given Him His orders under the great seal of heaven (Luke iv. 18). He is the "tree of life," whose leaves are for the healing of the nations: He is "Jehovah Rophi," the Lord that healeth us. The brazen serpent was an excellent type of our Great Physician, Christ (John iii. 14). He rejects none that come, and heals all whom He undertakes. [b]

8—11. (8) lying words, such were the assurances of the false prophets. [a] (9) steal, *etc.*, comp. these sins and vices with the signs of amendment God looks for, *vv.* 5, 6. (10) delivered, or we are free to do all these things, because we have gone through the prescribed ceremonials of the temple. [b] (11) robbers, the word means those who rob with violence. God's holy temple was not a fit place for such to enter. "You make My house a place of sanctuary and protection to malefactors."

The need of repentance.—This heavenly Physician hath no practice but on humbled and broken-hearted sinners; these are they to whom He applies His remedies, and in whom He works and cures. He was appointed and designed to bind up the broken in heart. None others do think they need Christ's help, prize His remedies, or value His consolations: those that are whole, that never saw the "plague of their hearts," or groaned under the burden of their sins, do not think they need a physician. Christ hath few patients, and little practice in the world, because men are not sick of sin. [c]

12—16. (12) Shiloh, [a] in the tribe of Ephraim, and north of Bethel. Jos. xviii. 1; 1 Ga. iv. 3; Ps. lxxviii. 60. at the first, before the tabernacle was removed to Zion, or the temple built. (13) rising up early, a fig. for doing a thing earnestly. "Speaking zealously and earnestly." called, *etc.*, Pr. i. 24; Is. lxv. 12, lxvi. 4. (14) as I have done, *i.e.* I will utterly destroy it. (15) your brethren, the ten tribes, who had already come under Divine judgments. (16) pray not, spoken to Jeremiah. [b] cry, offering prayer aloud.

Prayer in time of trouble.—A German colporteur writes:—"A man who bought two Bibles of me told me how God's Word had delivered him from great distress of mind and body. He set up business for himself, but without any faith in God. In a few years he was reduced to poverty. He and his wife and children were actually starving. Suddenly he thought of his Bible and opened it. The first passage which caught his eye was, 'Call

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a Je. xxv. 5; Ne. ix. 5; Ps. xc. 2. "With God there is no free man but His servant, though in the galleys; no slave but the sinner, though in a palace: none noble but the virtuous, if never so basely descended; none rich but he that possesseth God, even in rags; none wise but he that is a fool to himself and the world; none happy but he whom the world pities. Let me be free, noble, rich, wise, happy, to God." — *Bp. Hall.*

b *J. Flavel.*

a Is. iv. 10, xiv. 13, 14.

b "The Prophet does not charge them with the transgression of the ritual ordinances of Moses, but with the breach of the weightier matter of the law."—*Lowth.*

vv. 9, 10. *Dr. T. Horton*, 345.

c *S. Tomlyns* (1659).

a "At Silo, where once was the tabernacle and ark of the Lord, there can scarcely be pointed out the foundation of an altar." — *S. Jerome.*

b "When people are given up to judicial hardness of heart, intercessory prayer for them is unavailing."—*Fuusset.*

"Comfort, like the golden sun, dispels the sullen

upon Me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.' The effect was overpowering. He fell on his knees, calling loudly and fervently on God. Peace came to his soul, and he has been delivered from trouble. In his house he has had ever since the bread needful for his earthly wants, and his soul feeds daily on 'the Bread of Life.'"

17—20. (17) what they do, in carrying out their worship of the most impure of all the heathen deities. (18) children, *etc.*, all taking some part in the degrading service. cakes,[a] made of honey, fine flour, *etc.*, in a round flat shape, to resemble the disc of the moon, to whom they were offered. queen of heaven, the moon.[b] Ashtoreth, the wife of Baal, the sun-god. (19) confusion . . faces? are they not themselves utterly disgraced and put to shame? (2) poured out, ch. iv. 25, 26, ix. 10, xii. 4. The creatures share man's lot.[c]

The wants and claims of our countrymen (*v.* 17).—I. Glance at the circumstances and conduct of the Jewish people, which gave rise to the language of the text. II. Follow up the striking suggestion of the text with relation to the spiritual evils of our native land. 1. Their secular condition : 2. Their religious state ; 3. Their future and everlasting habitation ; 4. The means provided for the restoration of men. Apply :—(1) What could be done? (2) What has been done? (3) What is yet to be done? (4) What have we personally done? (5) What shall we now do?[d]

What a child can do.—Even a child may do something to help forward Christ's cause. A company of men were pushing a boat into the water, but it stuck so fast that they could not move it. "Another pound," said one, "and it will go." "I can push a pound," answered a little boy. Upon the addition of his strength the boat again moved, and soon floated on the water. But all these men could not of themselves move the boat. —*Hottentot girls.*—A little Hottentot girl, nine years old, was asked how she and her younger sister spent their time. She replied, "We often pray to our Saviour to own us as his children, and to keep us from growing up as children of the devil. Then we sing verses together, which we learn at school. Sometimes we help old mother Lydia to work, and she gives us a piece of bread for our labour, for our parents are a great way off ; and when they are at home, we have to dig for roots in the fields to satisfy our hunger, for they are very poor, and have very little to give us."[e]

21—24. (21) burnt offerings, these should be wholly consumed on the altar. God says, they may be dealt with as common sacrifices, for they were insincere, and so an abomination unto Him.[a] (22) spake not, *etc.*, *i.e.* God did not give ceremonial rules first, but moral laws ; and His anxiety ever mainly concerns those moral laws.[b] (23) obey, *etc.*, De. vi. 3. (24) imagination, or stubbornness. went backward, like headstrong oxen.

Explicit obedience.—There was a cry of fire near a large schoolhouse. The children in the school were very much affrighted, and began to rush to the doors and stairs, thus perilling their limbs and lives. But there was one little girl who remained quietly in her seat. Her teacher asked her why she did not do as the other girls did. "My father is a fireman," she said ; "and he told me, whenever there was a cry of fire

shade with her sweet influence, and cheers the melancholy house of care."—*Rowe.*

a "Prob. very similar to those offered at Athens to Artemis in the middle of the month Munychion. These were round like the full moon, and covered with lights, and finally were burnt in her honour, forming with the added libation the symbol of a eucharist."—*Spk. Com.*

b Regarded as the symbol of female productiveness.

c Ro. viii. 20—22.

d Dr. R. M'All.

"Act! for in action are wisdom and glory ; fame, immortality,—these are its crown. Wouldst thou illumine the tablets of story? Build on *achievements* thy doom of renown."—*Anon.*

e R. T. S.

a "The Prophet tells the Jews that they may, if they please, eat the flesh of their burnt-offerings, as well as of their peace-offerings, for God will accept neither of them from their hands."—*Lowth.* Is. i. 11 ; Je. vi. 20 ; Am. v. 21.

b Ex. xix. 5, 6 ; Le. xi. 45.

vv. 21—23. *D. W. Marks*, 160.

"Christ's sheep were marked in the ear and the foot; 'They hear My voice, and follow Me.'"—*W. Jay.*

"This life will not admit of equality; but surely that man who thinks he derives consequence and respect from keeping others at a distance is as base-minded as a coward who shuns the enemy from the fear of an attack."—*Goethe.*

℣ *R. T. S.*

a Je. xlvii. 5, xlviii. 37.

b 2 Ki. xxi. 3–5.

"The redeeming power of the blood of Christ is greater than the condemning power of sin. This excellency it hath from the dignity of His person (for it is called the blood of God. Acts xx. 28), which makes His obedience and sufferings give more glory to God than our suffering in hell would have done. Isaiah xlii. 21; Rom. v. 17."—*Mather.*

c R. Watson.

a Je. xvi. 9.

"Reference is made in this *v.* to the joyous processions in which the bride and bridegroom are led through

while I was in school, to remain quiet in my seat; for that was the safest way. I was dreadfully frightened; but I knew that father had told me what was best: so I sat still when they ran to the doors."

25—28. (25) **sent unto you**, *v.* 13. **hardened . . neck**, ch. xvi. 12. (27, 28) **receiveth correction**, or direction, instruction for heaven-sent messengers. **truth**, in the sense of fidelity. **from their mouth**, which only makes false professions.

American parents.—The *American Sunday-School Herald*, a few years ago, states that a little girl, six years old, in a Sunday school, was repeating the fifth commandment. Her teacher endeavoured to show her in what way she was to honour her parents, and said, "You must honour your parents by obeying them." "O ma'am," exclaimed the child, "I cannot keep that commandment." "Why cannot you keep it, my dear?" "Because, ma'am, when my mother tells me to do one thing, my father tells me to do another. Now, just before I came here, my mother told me to stay upstairs and learn my lesson, and my father told me to come down and play: now, how could I obey them both? No, no," closing her little hands, as if in despair; "no, no, ma'am, it is impossible for me ever to keep that commandment."

29—31. (29) **cut . . hair**, a sign of mourning.[a] It is commanded in anticipation of the desolation of Jerusalem. **generation . . wrath**, that is but the subject of His judgments. "This sinful generation, who have so highly provoked His anger." (30) **in the house**, *etc.*, this must refer to the times of Manasseh.[b] (31) **high places**, here prob. meaning "artificial mounds." **Tophet**, 2 Ki. xxiii. 10. **burn**, *etc.*, Le. xx. 2—5.

Nature of repentance.—Repentance, as explained by John's ministry, is a conviction of the fact of sin, but a sharp and painful conviction. A conviction that never produced humility, never sighed, never wept, never "wept apart," and never sought solitude for the purpose of prayer and reflection, is not that which is an element of true repentance. It is a serious and painful apprehension of danger. Hence John asked the Pharisees and Sadducees that came to his baptism, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Repentance is an humble confession of sin. The people confessed generally to John; for it was impossible for him to enter into the particulars of each case; but to God they confessed their sins in detail. Repentance is fruitful. Under its influence the churl becomes liberal: the unjust becomes righteous; and those who had formerly been careless of their spiritual interests wait upon God in the use of every means of grace. Repentance is despairing, but hopeful. The people who were awakened under John's ministry felt that in themselves there was no help; and he taught the whole of them to wait for Christ the Saviour.[c]

32—34. (32) **valley of slaughter**, bec. the enemies coming upon Jerusalem would make so great a slaughter of the people there. **bury**, the dead of the siege. (33) **carcases**, dead bodies cast out, wh. none should trouble to bury. **fray them away**, no passer by to drive off the birds. (34) **cease**, *etc.*, silence shall fall upon the utterly desolated and deserted city.[a]

Silence of sorrow.—"Then will I cause to cease from the

cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; for the land shall be desolate." It was the custom in the East, even in modern times, to conduct the bride and bridegroom through the streets, with the loudest demonstrations of joy. Rauwolf found this custom also prevalent in Aleppo. "When a Turkish woman is going to be married, and the bridegroom is conducted to her house, their relations and friends, who are invited to the wedding, as they go along through the streets cry with such a loud voice, which they gradually raise as they advance, that they can be heard from one street to the other." When the Prophet paints a period of public distress, he says among other things, "The voice of the bride and the bridegroom shall no longer be heard." Thus, in Persia, no marriages are celebrated during Lent (the month of Ramadan), and the solemnities of mourning in memory of Hossein; because everything must then be still and mournful. (Olearius.)—ROSENMULLER.

the streets, accompanied by bands of singers and musicians."—*Henderson.*

"When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war. The laboured battle sweat and conquest bled."—*D. K. Lee.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) **at that time,** when the city shall be taken. **bring . . bones,** ransacking even the very tombs, in hope of finding treasure.[a] (2) **spread,** *etc.*, or toss them out, exposing them openly to view. **loved . . served . . walked . . worshipped,** "there is great force in the piled up verbs by wh. their worship of the heavenly bodies is described."[b] The point is, that these gods prove utterly unable to prevent such desecration. "They are unconcerned spectators of the indignity offered to their former worshippers." (3) **residue,** or survivors of the great calamity. **evil family,** ch. i. 15.

Death of Despair.—So Mr. Great-heart, old Honest, and the four young men, went to go up to Doubting Castle, to look for Giant Despair. When they came at the castle gate, they knocked for entrance with an unusual noise. At that the old Giant comes to the gate, and Diffidence, his wife, follows. Then said he, Who and what is he that is so hardy as after this manner to molest the Giant Despair? Mr. Great-heart replied, It is I, Great-heart, one of the King of the Celestial country's conductors of pilgrims to their place; and I demand of thee that thou open thy gates for my entrance; prepare thyself also to fight, for I am come to take away thy head, and to demolish Doubting Castle. Now Giant Despair, because he was a giant, thought no man could overcome him: and again, thought he, Since heretofore I have made a conquest of angels, shall Great-heart make me afraid? So he harnessed himself, and went out: he had a cap of steel upon his head, a breastplate of fire girded to him, and he came out in iron shoes, with a great club in his hand. Then these six men made up to him, and beset him behind and before; also when Diffidence, the giantess, came up to help him, old Mr. Honest cut her down at one blow. Then they fought for their lives, and Giant Despair was brought down to the ground, but was very loth to die. He struggled hard, and had, as they say, as many lives as a cat; but Great-heart was his

[a] "Josephus says that immense riches were deposited in David's sepulchre by his son Solomon, which were never taken away till Hyrcanus's time."—*Antiq.* vii. 15.

[b] *Spk. Com.*

"The Prophet, beginning with the heart, describes their worship in the various stages of its development, and then contrasts its fulness with the miserable reward that ensues."—*Hitzig.*

"He that despairs, degrades the Deity, and seems to intimate that He is insufficient, or not just to His word; and in vain hath read the Scriptures, the world, and man."—*Fuller.*

death, for he left him not till he had severed his head from his shoulders.[c]

4—7. (4) moreover, resumption of the main prophecy fr. ch. vii. 28. not arise, or try to get up again. turn away, *i.e.* wander fr. his path. return, or try to find his path again. (5) perpetual backsliding, keeping on wandering further and further, with no attempts to return.[a] (6) as the horse, at full speed, that cannot be checked.[b] (7) stork, Is. i. 3. A migratory bird. turtle, a kind of dove, Cant. ii. 12. crane . . swallow, Is. xxxviii. 14. judgment, or ordinances.

Human rejection of Divine love (*v.* 6).—I. God's love. II. Man's rejection of it. 1. The wrong words; 2. The impenitence; 3. The recklessness; 4. Stupidity.[c]

Horses in battle.—"The Marmalukes, wearing their beards long and rough, with graue and sterne countenance, hauing strong and able bodies, vsed such cunning in all their fights and battels, that after they had giuen the first charge with their launces, they would by and bye, with wonderful actiuitie, vse their bows and arrows, casting their targuets behind them; and forthwith the horseman's mace, or crooked scimitar, as the manner of the battel or place required. Their horses were strong and couragious, in making and swiftnesse much like unto the Spanish jennets: and that which is of many hardly beleeued, so docile, that at certaine signes or speeches of the rider they would with their teeth reach him up from the ground a launce, an arrow, or such like thing: and as if they had known the enemie, run vpon him with open mouth, and lash at him with their heeles, and had by nature and custom learned not to be afraid of anything. These courageous horses were commonly furnished with siluer bridles, gilt trappings, rich saddles, their necks and brests armed with plates of yron: the horseman himselfe was commonly content with a coat of maile, or a brest plate of yron. The chiefe and wealthiest of them vsed head pieces: the rest a linnen covering of the head, curiously folded into manie wreathes, wherewith they thought themselves safe ynough against any handie strokes: the common souldiers vsed thrumb'd caps, but so thicke that no sword could pierce them."[d]—*Here we are like birds of passage.*—"It is stated in the history of England that when the first missionary who arrived at Kent presented himself before the king, to solicit permission to preach the Gospel in his dominions, after long deliberation, when a negative was about to be put upon his application, an aged councillor, with his head silvered over with grey hairs, rose, and by the following speech obtained the permission which was requested. 'Here we are,' said the orator, 'like birds of passage: we know not whence we come, or whither we are going; if this man can tell us, for God's sake let him speak.' I say, if there are six hundred millions of our fellow-creatures who, like birds of passage, know not whence they came, nor whither they are going, for God's sake let us send them the Gospel, which will tell them whence they came, and which is able to make them wise unto salvation."[e]

8—12. (8) law . . with us, fr. this it appears that copies of the law were multiplied. in vain, if they failed to order and guide their lives by its precepts. scribes, or copyists.[a] Trans.

c Bunyan.

a "An expostulation, implying that men are seldom so far gone in wickedness as not to be touched with some remorse for their evil doings, and make some general resolutions of amendment; whereas this people are guilty of one perpetual apostasy, as if they could deceive God by their hypocritical pretences, without making any steps towards a reformation."—*Lowth.*

Je. vii. 24.

b "A double metaphor: first, the determined persistence of the people in sin is compared to the blind fury which at the sound of the trumpet seizes upon the warhorse; and then its impetuous rush into the battle is likened to the overflowing of a torrent (the word *rushing* is lit. *overflowing*), wh. nothing can stop in its destructive course."—*Spk. Com.*

c Dr. H. Bonar.

d Knolles.

"As well the soldier dieth who standeth still, as he that gives the bravest onset."—*Sir P. Sidney.*

e Dr. Philip.

a Ezr. vi. 6; Ne. viii. 9, 13.

"the lying pen of the scribes hath made it into a lie," wh. suggests that they were unfaithful in copying.[b] (9) wise, evidently meaning, they who think themselves wise. rejected . . Lord, by persisting in false interpretations of the Word. (10—12) wives, *etc.*, comp. ch. vi. 12—15.

Difficulties and dangers of infidelity (*v.* 9).—The text includes three classes of men who do not believe the Scriptures. I. Sceptics, those who profess to be in uncertainty. 1. When sincere they must be miserable; 2. Wretched; 3. Continual mental conflict must be torment. II. Atheists. III. Deists.[c]

13—17. (13) consume them, by the destructive power of the Chaldæans: "gather and sweep them away." "Judah is a vine wh. bears no fruit, a tree which makes even no profession of life, for her leaf is dry."[a] (14) why . . still? making no effort to prepare against the threatened calamity. Jeremiah tells the attitude wh. the nation ought to take. water of gall, poison,[b] De. xxix. 18. (15) health, or rest. (16) his horses, those of the on-coming enemy. Dan, ch. iv. 15. strong ones, chargers. (17) will send, better, "am sending." cockatrices, or *basilisks*,[c] types of dangerous enemies.

Serpents.—Few animals excite more horror on their first appearance than these common enemies, both of man and beast. The possibility of some being made subject to certain incantations or charms is remarkable, and is often referred to in Scripture. The Hindoos, or at least the serpent-charmers, pretend to handle all sorts of snakes with impunity, to make them come and go at pleasure, and, in short, to have a cabalistic authority over the whole race. The cobra is the only serpent used for display by jugglers. When caught, it is held at arm's length by the tail, and as often as it attempts to strike, it is beaten off. It is then seized by the head, thrown on the ground, and its fangs knocked out with a hammer; after which its poison bag is squeezed dry. By these means the cobra is rendered harmless, though it may be easily excited, and made to raise itself in answer to the sounds of music (Ps. lviii. 4, 5). A gentleman, having visited Madras, writes: "One of the most noted serpent-charmers about the district chanced one morning to get hold of a cobra, of considerable size, which he got conveyed to his home. He was occupied abroad all day, and had not time to get the dangerous fang extracted from the serpent's mouth. In the evening he returned to his dwelling, considerably excited with liquor, and began to exhibit his snakes to various persons who were around him. The newly-caught cobra was brought out with the others, but it darted at the juggler's chin, which it bit, leaving two or three little marks. The poor juggler, who was immediately sobered, exclaimed, 'I am a dead man! Nothing can save me.' Well did he know the deadly character of the bite, for in two hours he was a corpse! Some of his friends and companions in art vehemently asserted that it was not the envenomed bite which had killed him. 'No, no: he only forgot one little word —one small portion of the charm.' His death, however, gave a severe blow to the art and practice of snake-charming in Madras." The basilisk is frequently mentioned in Scripture, but no description is given further than that it cannot be charmed. The Greek text calls it basilisc, and the Hebrew *tsepha*, while the English improperly renders it cockatrice, a fabulous animal that never

b Scholz suggests that there is here a reference to a corruption of the text, by an omission of those passages which denounced idolatry. *v.* 8. *E. M. Goulburn*, 129: *Dr. N. Carter*, 87. *v.* 9. *T. Dwight*, i. 482; *C. Benson, Huls. Lec.* 90. *v.* 11. *J. H. Newman*, 86.

c Dr. Bennett.

a Spk. Com.

"The vintage and harvest are frequently employed figuratively as images of complete destruction; but here the terms are to be taken in their literal application." — *Henderson.*

b "Lit. water of the poisonous plant, perhaps the poppy."—*Fausset.*

Je. ix. 15, xxiii. 15.

c Is. xi. 8.

"Serpent charmers in the East entice serpents by music, and by a particular pressure on the neck render them incapable of darting."—*Fausset.*

"No part of conduct asks for skill more nice, though none more common, than to give advice; misers themselves in this will not be saving, unless their knowledge makes it worth the having; and where's the wonder, when we will obtrude a useless gift, it meets ingratitude?"—*Sellingfleet.*

existed. The eggs of the basilisk are referred to in Isa. lix. 5; hence it would appear to be a snake, and not a viper, as the latter brings forth its young alive.[d]

18—22. (18) comfort myself, try to find some ground of consolation. faint in me, it misgives me. Fear prevails over hopes. (19) behold, *etc.*, Heb. is better rend., "The voice of the cry of the daughter of my people from a land afar off." Jer. anticipates the complaints of the captive Jews. (20) harvest is past, harvest and summer being times of opportunity.[a] (21) hurt, or breaking. black, "look ghastly, as those who are dying." (22) balm,[b] Ge. xxxvii. 25. Gilead, ch. xlvi. 11: this district was famous for balm, turpentine, and similar healing gums; therefore physicians and surgeons resorted thither.[c]

The day of grace (*v.* 20).—I. A short time, and therefore requires diligence: the King's business requires haste. II. A limited time, as summer days are longer than winter days. III. A varying time: rainbow of mercy seen only in the day of grace.[d]—*The harvest past.*—I. Every person who still remains in sin may, at the close of the year, usefully adopt this lamentation. II. A season in which religion prevails is also eminently a time of harvest, and such as lose this season may well adopt the lamentation of the text. III. Another situation to which this melancholy reflection is peculiarly applicable is that of a dying sinner.[e]

"*Too late! lost, and for ever!*"—Such were the ominous words of a dying friend. I had known him long; he was what the world calls "a moral man." He was industrious, honest, kind, and generous, ever ready, when an opportunity offered, to do his neighbour a favour, and, consequently, gathered around him a large circle of warm friends. What lacked he still? He was not a Christian; often had the claims of religion been urged upon him, but he invariably took refuge in the evasion, "I will think about it. I mean to become a Christian before I die." Some time since, he was taken suddenly ill, and sent for me to come and see him die. I went. What a change a week had wrought in that strong man! There he lay, an emaciated skeleton, scorched with fever, and suffering the most excruciating pain. His wife and children were weeping around his bed, for he was evidently near his last, yet could speak very distinctly. I sat down upon the bedside and tried to talk to him: he was all attention; but when I had finished what I had to say, he fixed his eyes upon me, and then upon his wife and children, and said, "I am dying, and am going to hell! Too late! too late! Lost, and for ever!" If ever I saw horror, and gloom, and a countenance from which the last ray of hope had faded away into the blackness of despair, it was there. We were stupefied; the house was bathed in tears. Many a poor man and woman that he had assisted was there, but their cries and petitions could not save him. His words, as to dying, were true; and turning over, as if to hide his face from us, in a violent convulsion, he burst a blood-vessel, and was a dead man.—*Why men perish—The physician spurned.*—Two gentlemen were fellow-passengers in a vessel bound to a distant port. One was in vigorous health, and the other emaciated with disease, and manifesting premonitory symptoms of a speedy dissolution. He was young and intelligent, but had not made what he knew to be the necessary preparation for the event which was rapidly approaching. His fellow-passenger,

d Bib. Treas.

a "*Summer* is the fruit-gathering, which follows the corn-harvest... Despair seized the people when they saw opportunities for their deliverance again and again pass by, till God seemed utterly to have forgotten them."—*Spk. Com.*

b "In an old version this word is translated *treacle*."—*H. Macmillan.*

c "Jeremiah implies that the fault lay wholly in the patients themselves, who refused to submit to the prescriptions."—*Lowth.*

v. 20. *H. King*, 311; *Dr. J. Dupré*, i. 1; *E. Cooper*, iii. 126; *E. Butcher*, 315; *J. Miller*, 423.

v. 22. *T. Adams*, 216; *J. Scott*, 123; *J. Wesley*, vii. 281; *W. Romain*, iii. 353; *E. Cooper*, v. 361; *G. W. Woodhouse*, ii. 271; *F. Close*, i. 319.

d G. S. Bowes, B.A.

e Dr. T. Dwight.

Some one once asked a venerable minister of the Gospel this question:—"What is the hardest (meaning the most dreadful) text in the Bible?" The minister referred to a text, saying, "I know of no harder text than this, and yet there is nothing about damnation or hell in it."

as they were drawing near the port whither they were bound, advised him to consult an eminent physician who resided there. "No," he replied. "I shall not consult him." He was asked why. To which he answered, "It is not because I do not entertain the highest opinion of his skill, but he will honestly tell me that my disease is incurable, that I must die; and I do not wish to receive the announcement from such a source."—*The balm of life.*—"Alexander the Great was dying of a wound, which did not seem very dangerous at first, but it baffled his physicians, and was rapidly becoming mortal. One night, however, it is said he dreamed that some one had brought him a peculiar-looking plant, which, when applied to the festering sore, had cleansed and closed it. In the morning, when he awoke, he described the plant; and the historian informs us that it was sought for and found, and when applied to the wound, the fiery pain subsided, and he was speedily healed. Now your soul has received a deadly hurt: it has been stung by the old serpent, the devil. The wound gets worse. There is a tender plant which is able to heal you; it is the Balm of Gilead. They used to wound the balsam tree, in order to obtain its healing essence; and so for our transgressions the Saviour was wounded, and 'by His stripes ye are healed.'"[e]—*Poison and antidote.*—There is a tree called the manchaneel, which grows in the West Indies; its appearance is very attractive, and the wood of it peculiarly beautiful; it bears a kind of apple, resembling the golden pippin. This fruit looks very tempting, and smells very fragrant: but to eat of it is instant death: and its sap or juice is so poisonous, that if a few drops of it fall on the skin it raises blisters, and occasions great pain. The Indians dip their arrows in the juice, that they may poison their enemies when they wound them. Providence hath so appointed it that one of these trees is never found, but near it there also grows a white wood, or a fig tree, the juice of either of which, if applied in time, is a remedy for the diseases produced by the manchaneel. Sin, like this poisonous apple, looks pleasant to the eye, and men desire it,—eat of it, and die. But there is a remedy at hand; it is the precious blood of the Son of God, which soothes the troubled conscience, and cleanses it from all sin.

"Not balm, new bleeding from the wounded tree,
Nor bless'd Arabia with his spicy grove,
Such fragrance yields."

The words which he repeated were these:—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."—Jeremiah viii. 20. Certainly there are in the Bible no words more fearful than these. What can be more dreadful than the wail of a lost soul?

"Has a man lost a good situation, it is said, 'His harvest is past.' Is a person amassing much money, it is said, 'He is gathering in his harvest.'"—*Roberts.*

[e] *Dr. J. Hamilton.*

"The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded. The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or nine at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but if he sees you at a billiard table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day; demands it before he can receive it in a lump."—*Franklin.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—3. (1) fountain, or reservoir, fr. wh. tears might freely flow. slain, in the great coming calamity.[a] (2) wilderness, far away fr. the abodes of men who will not heed my message. lodging place, or *caravanserai*[b] assembly, or gang. (3) like their bow,[c] or just as soldiers before battle bend their bows, so they prepare to shoot out lying words, like arrows. "The tongue is here aptly compared to the bow, and deceit to the arrow shot from it."[d]

Religious consolation (*v.* 1).—I. Religion affords ample solace to the afflicted. 1. The poor; 2. The bereaved; 3. The sick. II. The Gospel bestows healing on the patient. III. Religion

[a] This *v.* is by many joined to the previous chapter. Is. xxii. 4; La. ii. 11, iii. 48.

[b] "This lodge generally consists of a large square building, enclosing a court open above, round the sides of which

affords solid comfort to those mourning over their own corruptions. 1. The Word of God teaches them that the painful consciousness of their own imperfections has ever been a characteristic of the most eminent saints: 2. And assures every believer of a final triumph over his corruptions.[e]

A lodge in the wilderness.—People in the East, on their journeys to other towns or countries, are obliged to travel through the most lonely wilds. On this account the native sovereigns, or opulent men, erect what are called "rest-houses," or *choultries*, where the travellers or pilgrims reside for the night. "In the wilderness," too, devotees and ascetics live retired from men: there, either for life, or for a short period, they perform their austerities, and live in cynical contempt of the rest of mankind. When a father is angry with his family, he often exclaims, "If I had but a shade in the wilderness, then should I be happy. I will become a pilgrim and leave you." Nor is this mere empty declamation to alarm his family; for numbers in every town and village thus leave their homes and are never heard of more. There are, however, many who remain absent for a few months or years, and then return. Under these circumstances, it is no wonder, when a father or husband threatens his family to retire to the *kātu*, that is, "wilderness," that they become greatly alarmed. But men who have been reduced in their circumstances become so mortified, that they also retire from their homes, and all their future days wander about as pilgrims. "Alas! alas! I will retire to the jungle, and live with wild beasts!" says the broken-hearted widow.

"Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade!"[f]

4—8. (4) take ye heed, *etc.*, in such a state of society no man could trust his brother. supplant, as Jacob did.[a] (5) weary themselves, through taking such pains, and making such efforts. (6) thine habitation, addressed to the Prophet. Some regard it as the continuation of the warning of *v.* 4. Trust no one, for deceit is all round thee. (7) melt them, in refining fires of national calamity. how, *etc.*, *i.e.* how otherwise. (8) arrow,[b] *v.* 3. his wait, or a trap to catch him.[c]

Difficulties of old age without religion (*v.* 4).—I. That period of life during which the Saviour grants to men the privileges of the Gospel is known under the appellation of a day of grace; a day in which He waits for the sinner's repentance, and is peculiarly eager to aid his efforts. II. But a short portion of the day of grace is now left to him. III. The heart has become increasingly hard. IV. The pride of character which attends the advanced periods of life.

Self-respect in old age.—If reverence is due from others to the old, they ought also to respect themselves: and by grave, and prudent, and holy actions, to put a crown of glory upon their own grey heads. They ought not to be vain and light in their converse; nor children of a hundred years old; nor, by the folly and wickedness of their lives, expose themselves to that contempt which will certainly be cast upon them, where age is not accompanied with gravity and prudence. And therefore we find it (Prov. xvi. 31), "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness;" otherwise, instead of being a glory, it is but a double shame and reproach.[e]

are small arches, and within each of these is a dark cell or dormitory, without furniture or accommodation of any kind."—*Henderson.*

c "The word *bend*, lit. *tread*, means to string, the bow being held firmly by one foot while the string is pushed up to the notch. The Assyrians held it with the knee."—*Spk. Com.*

d Ps. lxiv. 3, 4.

vv. 1—4. *Dr. G. Townsend*, 136.

v. 3. *Dr. A. Gerard*, ii. 1; *J. Gaskin*, 398.

e Pulpit Studies.

f Roberts.

a Ge. xxv. 26, xxvii. 36; Ho. xii. 3.

b "The arrow shot out" may be trans. "murderous arrow."

c "'Layeth his ambush.'"—*Henderson.*

v. 5. *P. Skelton*, ii. 431.

d S. H. Tyng.

v. 1. "Each of the negroes took from his quiver a handful of arrows and putting two between his teeth, and one in his bow, waved to us with his hand to keep at a distance."—*Mungo Park.*

e Bp. Hopkins.

9—11. (9) not visit, ch. v. 9, 29. (10) habitations, or pasture-lands:[a] with poss. allusion to the temporary encampments of the shepherds. burned up, marg. *desolate*. (11) Jerusalem, the city, as well as the country, was thus to be overwhelmed. dragons, or jackals.[b]

Emblem of depravity.—In a vessel filled with muddy water, the thickness visibly subsided to the bottom, and left the water purer and purer, until at last it seemed perfectly limpid. The slightest motion, however, brought the sediment again to the top; and the water became thick and turbid as before. "Here," said Gotthold, when he saw it, "we have an emblem of the human heart. The heart is full of the mud of sinful lusts and carnal desires; and the consequence is, that no pure water—that is, good and holy thoughts—can flow from it. It is, in truth, a miry pit and slough of sin, in which all sorts of ugly reptiles are bred and crawl. Many a one, however, is deceived by it, and never imagines his heart half so wicked as it really is, because sometimes its lusts are at rest, and sink to the bottom. But this lasts only so long as he is without opportunity or incitement to sin. Let that occur, and worldly lusts rise so thick, that his whole thoughts, words, and works show no trace of anything but slime and impurity. One is meek as long as he is not thwarted: cross him, and he is like powder ignited by the smallest spark, and blazing up with a loud report and destructive effect. Another is temperate so long as he has no jovial companions; a third chaste while the eyes of men are upon him."

12—16. (12) wise man, able to trace the connection bet. suffering and sin. (13) Lord saith, speaking Himself, bec. the wise men failed. set before them, made plainly and publicly known to them. (14) imagination, as before, better rend. *stubbornnesses*. Baalim, ch. ii. 8, 23. (15) wormwood, De. xxix. 18. water of gall, ch. viii. 14. (16) scatter them, Le. xxvi. 33.

Self-made misery.—Men are too often ingenious in making themselves miserable, by aggravating to their own fancy, beyond bounds, all the evils which they endure. They compare themselves with none but those whom they imagine to be more happy: and complain that upon them alone has fallen the whole load of human sorrows. "I will restore thy daughter again to life," said an Eastern sage to a prince who grieved immoderately for the loss of a beloved child, "provided thou art able to engrave on her tomb the names of three persons who have never mourned." The prince made inquiry after such persons; but found the inquiry vain, and was silent.

17—22. (17) mourning women, who attended funerals to help the wailing.[a] cunning, or skilled in wailing.[b] (18) make haste, intimating that the calamity was near at hand. for us, who mourn over Jerusalem as spiritually dead. (19) cast us out, spewed us out, Le. xviii. 28. (20) hear, *etc.*, even the younger women must join the wailing, for the number of dead would be so great. The women were to wail while the men resisted the besieger. (21) into our windows, *i.e.* the besiegers burst in at the windows. from without, or from being able to go out. (22) handful, laid on the ground to make up a sheaf.

Death (*v.* 21).—Death as an enemy is—I. Cruel. 1. Strikes at

[a] "The wilderness sometimes signifies the plain or champaign country, and is opposed to the mountains."—*Lowth.*

[b] Ps. lxiv. 19; Is. xiii. 22, xxxiv. 13; Je. li. 37. Northern mythology tells of the Midgard serpent, whom Odin feared would bring much trouble to the gods. He caused it to be brought to him, when he hurled it into the deep ocean. But the monster grew to such enormous size, that it could hold its tail in its mouth, thus encircling the whole earth. So extensive is that depravity which follows the serpent's trail from Eden.

"The carnal mind, which is enmity, fortifies the soul against God, as with bars and doors; averts it from Him, carries with it a horrid, guilty consciousness, which fills it with eternal despair and rage; and inwraps it in the blackness of darkness for ever."—*Howe.*

[a] "Those whose business it was to attend funerals, and by their skilled wailings aid the real mourners in giving vent to their grief. Hired mourners are still employed in Egypt." — *Spk. Com.*

2 Chr. xxxv. 25; Ec. xii. 5; Am. v. 16; Mat. ix. 23; Mk. v. 38.

b Skilful in lamentation.

c Dr. Thomas.

"Of the twenty-five barons who were appointed to enforce the observance of Magna Charta," says Sir Bernard Burke's second series of *Vicissitudes of Families*, "there is not now in the House of Peers a single male descendant."

d Dr. Thompson.

"If there be a regal solitude, it is a sick bed. How the patient lords it there! what caprices he acts without control! how king-like he sways his pillow—tumbling, and tossing, and shifting, and lowering, and thumping, and flatting, and moulding it, to the ever-varying requisitions of his throbbing temples."—*L. prob.*

e Duke of Manchester.

the dearest objects of our affections; 2. Robs us of our most useful men; 3. Drags us from the dearest things of the heart; 4. Reduces our bodies to the dust. II. He is unremitting. III. He is subtle. IV. He is resistless. V. He is ubiquitous. VI. He is conquerable. Christ has conquered death—1. In His own resurrection: 2. In His power upon the minds of His disciples.[c]

Mourning at the grave.—I have noticed every morning since coming to Sidon, that women come forth very early to visit the graves. They move about under the trees and among the tombs in the grey dawn, wrapped up from head to foot in their white sheets, and looking for all the world like veritable ghosts. Sometimes I hear the voice of prayer; some weep and sob, while others sing or chant in a low, monotonous tone. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred this public manifestation is the work of that arch-tyrant, custom, and nothing more. . . . Some of these mourners have tents pitched above the graves which require to be wept over. These, however, afford but slight protection against the pitiless storm and piercing wind. The great majority have no cover, and the mourners go home to nurse rheumatisms, burn in fevers, or go blind with ophthalmia. The real weeping is in the houses. And when you further know that many of these mourners and chanters are hired, and weep, howl, beat their breast, and tear their hair, according to contract, your compassion will fail fast, take another direction, and sigh for the victims of folly and fashion.[d]—*Death in our palaces—Queen Elizabeth's christening.*—The very christening of this little lady looks now like a gorgeous dance of death. Nearly all the noblemen who figured officially at it came to as violent an end as the baby's mother, or were otherwise gloomily distinguished. Essex, who carried the basins, was the last of the earls of the line of Bouchier. Exeter, who carried the wax, the first marquis of the house of Courtenay, was beheaded. Dorset, who bore the salt—the Grey who, like the king, repudiated his first wife, Catharine Fitz-Alan, and, by King Henry's niece, became the father of Lady Jane Grey—also passed under the axe. Lord Rochford, a graceful rhymer and clever sonneteer, and Lord Hussey, who swelled the train, tasted soon after the scaffold. Cranmer, the young princess's godfather, came to a more painful end by fire; while the Earl of Wiltshire, worse than submitting to the headsman himself, saw his son undergo that bloody submission: and the Early of Derby, the luckiest man of this awfully splendid group, came off with no worse fortune than having a daughter married to the Lord Stourton, who was hanged.[e]

a "*Wisdom* here is political sagacity. *Might* is military prowess."—*Fausset.*

b "Because the Jews valued themselves so much on their circumcision, God tells them, when He sends His judgments abroad in the world, they shall find no more

23—26. (23) wise . . mighty . . rich,[a] the three classes that might expect to defend and preserve themselves and their city in times of national distress. (24) knoweth me, 1 Cor. i. 31; 2 Cor. x. 17. The true knowledge of God leads to practical obedience of His will. (25) punish, Heb. *visit upon.* circumcised, *etc.*, confidence in their being circumcised would not avail the unfaithful Jews, but the judgments of uncircumcised sinners shall come upon them.[b] (26) Egypt, *etc.*, comp. list in ch. xxv. corners,[c] *lit.* corners of their hair shorn. A peculiarity of certain Arabs (Le. xix. 27).

The glory of man (*v.* 23).—I. The glory forbidden. 1. In wisdom: 2. In might; 3. In riches. II. The glory enjoined. 1. The knowledge that there is a God; 2. The knowledge of God

as the moral Governor of the universe; 3. The knowledge of God as the God of redemption. Apply:—(1) Let us avoid all forbidden grounds of glorying: (2) Let us understand what is the enjoined grounds of glorying: (3) Let us acknowledge the superiority of the Christian's ground of glorying.[d]

Clairaut.—Clairaut was born in France in 1713, and began the study of mathematics as soon as he could lisp his A B C; for the first book which was put into his hands, and from which his father taught him to read, was Euclid's Elements. When only nine years of age, algebra and geometry were familiar to him, and the solution of the most difficult problems he considered as an amusement. At eleven years old he understood the most abstruse parts of the science; and at his twelfth year he composed a treatise on some discoveries he had made in mathematics, which was published in 1724, with an honourable certificate from the Academy of Sciences. In 1730 he wrote an ingenious treatise on "Curves of a Double Curvature," which would have done honour to the ablest geometrician. The Academy of Sciences at Paris, equally delighted and surprised at the exhibition of such wonderful talents in such a youth, departed from their rule, by receiving him into their Society before he had attained the age required for the admission of members. He was received when only in his eighteenth year.[e]

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1—5. (1, 2) **signs of heaven**, eclipses, comets, etc., which heathen peoples greatly fear.[a] (3) **customs**, established institutions. **one cutteth**, *i.e.* anybody can do it. (4) **deck**, *etc.*, covering the wooden body with platings of gold and silver.[b] **with nails**, to secure it from falling down. (5) **upright**, stiff and straight.[c] **do evil**, Is. xli. 23.

Hearing the Word of the Lord (*v.* 1).—I. What is the Word of the Lord? His Law and Gospel. II. What is implied in hearing the Word of God? 1. That we attend His ordinances; 2. That we observe what we hear; 3. That we understand what we observe; 4. That we believe what we understand; 5. That we remember what we believe; 6. That we practise what we remember; 7. That we continue in what we practise. III. Why should we hear? 1. Because God has commanded it; 2. Because it is for our great interest, it being the means of repentance, faith, light, comfort, and leads to eternal happiness. IV. How worthy of reproof are they—1. Who do not come to hear; 2. Who do not hear when they are come; 3. Who do not mind what they hear if they do come: 4. Who do not understand what they give attention to; 5. Who will not believe what they understand; 6. Who will not practise what they believe. V. Exhortation. 1. Hear God's Word with reverence; 2. Caution; 3. Attention; 4. Intention.[d]

"*Signs of heaven.*"—Heathenism in all ages has been a prolific system of doubt and dismay to its millions of votaries. It has laid prostrate, or warped aside, the finest intellects; and made created and lifeless objects the controllers of human hope and fear, rather than the great Creator. How lamentable that it was necessary for this holy patriot and prophet to warn the Jews from following

favour than those who are not circumcised."—*Lowth.*

c Cut as to the corners of the beard.

"Several Arabian tribes living not far from the Holy Land adopted the custom, as a sign of their special religion, of shaving the hair of their heads in an extraordinary fashion, viz., either on the crown of the head, or towards the temples, or else of disfiguring a portion of the beard." — *Herodotus.*

v. 24. *Dr. J. Harris, Boyle Lec.*

d G. Brooks.

e R. T. S.

a "The Heb., living, as they are supposed to do, in the midst of idolaters, were more or less exposed to their seductive influence. The Chaldæans specially employed their arts for the purpose of working on the superstitious fears of mankind."—*Henderson.*

b Is. xliv. 10, 11.

c "Like one of those stiff, inelegant pillars, something like a palm tree, which may be seen in Oriental architecture, and to wh., with their arms and legs close to their sides, and their legs and feet mere unshaped blocks, they might well be compared."—*Syk. Com.*

Hab. ii. 19; 1 Cor. xii. 2.

d W. Stevens.

"Superstition is the poesy of practical life. Hence, a poet is none the worse for being superstitious."—*Goethe.*

e Roberts.

a Re. xv. 4.

b Is. xli. 29; Ha. ii. 18.; Zec. x. 2.

c Ge. x. 4.

d Poss. the Paz of Job xxviii. 17, "Jewels of Paz."

v. 7. *J. Saurin*, i. 309.

e Pulpit Studies.

f Bib. Treas.

"Take away a toy from a child, and give him another, and he is satisfied; but if he be hungry no toy will do. As new-born babes, true believers desire the sincere milk of the Word; and the desire of grace in this way is grace."—*John Newton.*

Wonderful alchemy of God's grace it is which transmutes tribulation into triumph, turns waters of Marah into a healthful fountain, enables one to gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles, causes the rose to bloom through a whole winter of trials, and helps the soul to regard afflictions as promises, not threatenings!

ing the practices of the idolaters! and how vividly correct at this day are his descriptions of that soul-destroying system! Should a supposed malignant begin to rule in any given month, multitudes are in a state of terrible agitation, and, with the priests at their head, are devising a thousand plans to avert its direful potency. Though their astronomers can calculate with tolerable accuracy the time when an eclipse will occur, yet this will not serve in the least to pacify the vast tribes of the East. During its continuance they are all in a state of complete consternation; they abstain from their food and usual occupations, and yield themselves up to all the foolish impositions and absurd fantasies of their wily priests.[e]

6–10. (6) like . . thee, Ps. lxxxvi. 8, 10, (7) king of nations, *i.e.* all nations,[a] (8) brutish, debased, almost like mere animals[b] stock, contemptuous word for their idol. (9) Tarshish,[c] port on Spanish coast. Uphaz, Da. x. 5.[d] blue and purple, expensive, as dyed with the valuable *murex*, or shell-fish. (10) true God, *lit.* a God who is truth; who is a real God, not a sham figure.

The true and living God (*v.* 10).—I. The Lord is the true God. This is proved—I. By His Word; 2. His dealings; 3. His purposes; 4. His manifestations. II. The Lord is the living God, hence we should seek our spiritual life from Him. III. He is the everlasting King, hence we should inquire into and submit to His laws.[e]

Folly of idolatry and power of the Gospel.—It was related at a public meeting that several missionaries once landed in India, who, anxious to lose no time in proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, stopped at the first large village on their route, and, taking their stand under the shade of some large trees while the natives collected round them, they began to preach unto them Jesus. There was profound attention for more than an hour, when first one voice was raised and then another. "Jesus is the true God," "Jesus is the true God," they cried. "Come with us, and pull down our temples, and throw our gods down the hills." Then they led the way, and soon bore their wretched idol, which, though it had legs, could not walk, to the brow of a neighbouring hill, where they contemptuously flung it over. But the words of the text may be applied to other idols besides those of heathen nations. It is a fact, and a sight to be met with any day in Madras and other large Eastern cities. A set of bearers are hired one day to bear on their shoulders a hideous idol, ornamented with gold and gems: and the next, the same set of men carry forth in state the Virgin Mary. One form of idolatry is perhaps a little more refined than another; but how truly may it be said of them all, "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them!"—*Wind-storm in America.*—While at Washington, I first witnessed the wind-storm, which is common in this country. It is peculiar, sometimes awful. The morning had been hot, the sky fair: I had been to the Senate, and was now resting and writing in my chamber. Quietly the soft and refreshing breezes went down; a haze came over the sun, so that it shone as behind a gauze curtain. Every noise was stilled, except that of the frog, which was unpleasantly audible. The sky got silently darker, the atmosphere became oppressive, and not a breath of air was felt. Suddenly in the distance you

would see things in commotion; and, while everything was yet quiet about you, you might hear the distant roaring of the wind. Then the cattle run away to their best shelter; then the mother calls on her heedless children: and the housewife flies from story to story to close her windows and shutters against the entrance of the coming foe. Now the dust, taken up in whirlwinds, would come flying along the roads; and then would come the gust of wind, which would make everything tremble, and set the doors, windows, and trees flying, creaking, crashing around you. You would expect the torrent to fall and to roll: but no, there was neither rain nor thunder. It was wind, and wind alone; and it wanted nothing to increase its power on the imagination. It raged for a few minutes, and then passed as suddenly away, leaving earth and sky as tranquil and as fair as it found them. It is not easy to account for this very sudden destruction and restoration of an equilibrium in nature. The phenomenon, however, supplies a fine illustration of some striking passages in Holy Scripture.[g]

"Liberal minds are open to conviction. Liberal doctrines are capable of improvement. There are proselytes from atheism, but none from superstition."—*Junius.*

g Dr. Reed.

11—13. (11) **made . . earth**, this is the sole claim of Jehovah. (12) **he hath made**, Ge. i. 6. (13) **waters**, *etc.*, comp. the account of the creation.[a]

Gods of the heathen.—An Indian chief, having sent for Hiacoomes, a converted native, with the view of receiving religious instruction from him, after some conversation, the chief asked him how many gods the English worshipped. Hiacoomes answered, "One and no more." On which the chief reckoned up about thirty-seven principal gods which he had. "And shall I," said he, "throw away all these thirty-seven for the sake of one only?" "What do you yourself think?" said Hiacoomes; "for my part, I have thrown away all these, and many more, some years ago, and yet I am preserved, as you see, to this day." "You speak true," said the chief, "and therefore I will throw away all my gods too, and serve that one God with you." Hiacoomes proceeded more fully to instruct him, and the rest of the company with him: and the chief having promised to worship the true God, and serve Him only, was as good as his word, for he carried himself as a true servant of God, all the days of his life after.[b]

a Job xxxviii. 25, 26.

v. 11. *J. Mede*, i. 249; *Dr. J. Jortin*, iv. 193.

v. 12. *Origen, Op.* iii. 169.

"No man is born wise; but wisdom and virtue require a tutor, though we can easily learn to be vicious without a master."—*Seneca.*

b Whitecross.

14—16. (14) **brutish**, *v.* 8. **founder**, man who casts the metal idol. (15) **work of errors**, or deluded notions that *things* can ever be gods. They deserve only ridicule. (16) **portion of Jacob**, a term for Jehovah.[a] **rod . . inheritance**, "an expression taken from the first division of the land of Canaan, when the inheritance of each tribe and family was meted out with a line or a rod."[b]

Universal depravity.—If the words which the Apostle uses (Rom. iii. 10—19) do not most fully and determinately signify a universality, no words ever used in the Bible, or elsewhere, are sufficient to do it. I might challenge any man to produce any one paragraph in the Scripture, from the beginning to the end, where there is such a repetition and accumulation of terms, so strongly, and emphatically, and carefully to express the most perfect and absolutely universality, or any place to be compared to it. What instance is there in the Scripture, or indeed any other writing, when the meaning is only the much greater part,

a Comp. De. xxxii. 9; Ps. lxxiv. 2.

b Lowth.

All man's thoughts, all his desires, all his purposes are evil, expressly or by implication; because the subject of them is avowedly sinful, or because they do not proceed from a holy principle, and are not directed to a proper end. It is not occasionally that the human soul

is thus under the influence of depravity, but this is its *habit* and *state*. It seems impossible to construct a sentence wh. should more distinctly express its *total* corruption than this. (Gen. viii. 21.)

c Jon. Edwards.

where this meaning is signified in such a manner by repeating such expressions, "They are all," "they are all," "they are altogether," "every one," "all the world;" joined to multiplied negative terms, to show the universality to be without exception, saying, "There is no flesh," "there is none, there is none, there is none, there is none," four times over: besides the addition of "no, not one—no, not one," once and again. . . . So that if this matter [universal depravity] be not here set forth plainly, expressly, and fully, it must be because no words can do it; and it is not in the power of language, or any manner of terms and phrases, however contrived and heaped one upon another, determinately to signify any such thing.[c]

17, 18. (17) thy wares,[a] *i.e.* the few necessary things that time permits you to collect ere you are hurried into captivity. (18) sling out, a fig. indicating the suddenness and force of the desolation impending.[b] may find, or feel intensely.

a Movable property.

b Is. xxii. 18.

"Despair defies even despotism; there is that in my heart would make its way thro' hosts with levell'd spears."—*Lord Byron.*

"Lean abstinence, pale grief, and haggard care, the dire attendants of forlorn despair."—*Pattison.*

"To me to live is Christ." All other kinds of life will at last be found to have been only a living death.

Shun delays.—

Shun delays, they breed remorse;
Take thy time while time is lent thee:
Creeping snails have weakest force:
Fly their fault, lest thou repent thee.
Good is best when sooner wrought,
Ling'ring labours come to nought.

Hoist up sail while gale doth last,—
Tide and wind stay no man's pleasure!
Seek not time when time is past—
Sober speed is wisdom's leisure;
After-wits are dearly bought:
Let thy fore-wit guide thy thought.

Time wears all his locks before—
Take thou hold upon his forehead:
When he flees, he turns no more,
And behind his scalp is naked.
Works adjourn'd have many stays;
Long demurs breed new delays.[c]

c Southwell.

19—22. (19) woe is me, this is the cry of the Prophet, as representing the stricken nation before God. grievous, or mortal, incurable. (20) tabernacle, poetical for dwellings. none to stretch, *i.e.* the men are all swept away. (21) pastors, as before, the temporal rulers. (22) bruit, sound of the enemy.[a] dragons, or jackals.

a Je. vi. 22, ix. 11.

"It is asserted that a fashionable preacher, after having taken for his text these words of St. Paul, 'I will know nothing among you but Christ, and Christ crucified,' managed not to repeat this name a single time. It was easy: instead of speaking of devotion to the Saviour, he spoke of devotion in general—one of the favourite themes of the

A hint to ministers.—At a ministers' meeting at Northampton, a question was discussed, to the following purport: To what causes in ministers may much of their want of success be imputed? The answer turned chiefly upon the want of personal religion; particularly the neglect of close dealing with God in closet prayer. Jer. x. 21 was referred to: "Their pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord: therefore they shall not prosper, and their flocks shall be scattered." Another reason assigned was the want of reading and studying the Scriptures more as Christians, for the edification of their own souls. "We are too apt to study them," adds Mr. Fuller, "merely to find out something to say to others, without living upon the truth ourselves. If we eat not the book before we deliver its contents

to others, we may expect the Holy Spirit will not much accompany us. If we study the Scriptures as Christians, the more familiar we are with them the more we shall feel their importance; but if otherwise, our familiarity with the Word will be like that of soldiers and doctors with death—it will wear away all sense of its importance from our minds. To enforce this sentiment, Prov. xxii. 17, 18, was referred to—'Apply thine heart to knowledge: the words of the wise will be pleasant if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.' Another reason was, our want of being emptied of self-sufficiency. In proportion as we lean upon our own gifts, or parts, or preparations, we slight the Holy Spirit; and no wonder that, being grieved, He should leave us to do our work alone."[b]

23—25. (23) way .. himself, Pr. xvi. 1, xx. 24. Jeremiah's prayer in prospect of the national calamity. (24) with judgment, better, *in measure:* ch. xlvi. 28. bring .. nothing, marg. *diminish me.* (25) pour, *etc.*, Ps. lxxix. 6, 7.[a]

The way of man not in himself (*v.* 23).—I. Let us consider the conviction here expressed in its sources: "I know," says he. 1. The nature of our condition; 2. The limitation of our powers: 3. History: 4. Experience; 5. Scripture. II. Consider its uses. 1. It should produce gratitude; 2. Submission; 3. Check presumption: 4. Induce one to repair to God in earnest prayer. III. Let us glance at the encouragements of this conviction. God is—1. Able; 2. Willing: 3. Engaged to direct our steps.[b]

The hand of God.—Nothing was more remarkable than Newton's constant habit of regarding the hand of God in every event, however trivial it might appear to others. In walking to his church, he would say, "The way of man is not in himself, nor can he conceive what belongs to a single step. When I go to St. Mary Woolnoth, it seems the same whether I turn down Lothbury or go through the Old Jewry; but the going through one street and not another, may produce an effect of lasting consequence. A man cut down my hammock in sport; but had he cut it down half an hour later I had not been here, as the exchange of the crew was then making. A man made a smoke on the sea-shore at the time a ship passed, which was thereby brought to, and afterwards brought me to England."[c]

theo-philanthropy of the day."—*The Preacher and the King.*

"The desire for knowledge, like the thirst for riches, increases ever with the acquisition of it."—*Sterne.*

b Whitecross.

a "'Since I (my nation) must be corrected, I do not deprecate all chastisement, but pray only for moderation in it, and that the full tide of Thy fury may be poured out on the heathen invaders for their cruelty towards Thy people.'"—*Fauscet.*

v. 24. *Dr. M Hole*, i. 43; *R. Morehead*, ii. 298; *J. H. Pinder*, 277.

v. 25. *Dr. J. Orton*, ii. 69.

b W. Jay.

"We must follow, not force Providence."—*Shakespeare.*

c R. T. S.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—5. (1. 2) covenant, *see* 2 Ki. xxiii. 3.[a] (3) cursed, *etc.*, De. xxvii. 26; Ga. iii. 10. (4) obey, *etc.*, Le. xxvi. 3, 12. (5) oath, De. vii. 12, 13.

Fidelity to the truth.—The recording angel, as he writes down the shortcomings of at least the majority of those who are professedly Christians, must in our time give prominence to the fact that they are not, and make no effort to be, "valiant for the truth." It is easy to be valiant in a great many things, but not to be valiant in living for the truth—not merely in defending it by word of mouth, which is necessary, and yet only one part of the valour our cause requires. Lax modern notions on this subject have done mischief, not only in the world, but within the boundaries of our churches, since it has become the fashion with

a "What they were specially to communicate was the contents of that portion of the book of the law, which had been found in the temple in Josiah's time."—*Henderson.*

"The Prophet puts the people in mind of the renewal of the covenant lately made in the

time of Josiah."—*Lightfoot.*

vv. 1—10. *Origen, Op.* iii. 176.

Dr. Peckwell, a London clergyman, received infection from a dead body, and knew that he must soon die. He preached on the following Friday evening a touching and powerful sermon, told the people it was his last, and bade them farewell. So it proved; and on the Sunday a stranger filled his place.

b Teachers' Mag.

many thinkers to laud all display of energy and earnestness, no matter what the cause is which leads to their manifestation. Valour, like charity, is made to cover a multitude of sins: though if it is admirable and beautiful to see the truth valorously defended, it should be in the same proportion odious to us to witness what at any rate has the appearance of heroism expended in the behalf of error. For there are varieties of truth, as we know well—truth moral, intellectual, physical; truth which man can himself discover, and truth which he has only attained through a Divine revelation. But on any clearly defined subject there cannot be two opposite opinions which are true: and before we can be valiant we must have in our own minds clear and distinct views of what the Christian truth really is for which we are going to fight. A general who chose to clothe his troops in uniforms closely resembling those of the enemy, and had standards almost identical with theirs, might chance to achieve some success, yet he could not be surprised if he were severely beaten. Is it not to be feared that indolence lies at the root of our lack of valour far too frequently? We do not trouble ourselves to investigate, and not investigating, we do not feel as deeply as we should on many points which concern Christian doctrine. And still, on the other hand, we must be careful that we do not mistake for a precious portion of the truth, something which has only been attached thereto by the particular Church to which we adhere.[b]

6—10. (6) **proclaim**, the word used means also, *read aloud*, and it may refer to the newly-found book of the law,[a] wh. was to be made known to the people. (7) **earnestly protested . . rising early**, in Heb. language, early rising to do a thing is the sign of earnestness of purpose.[b] (8) **imagination**, *see* ch. iii. 17. **will bring**, better, *have brought:* the reference being to the fact constantly illustrated in their history that disobedience always brought calamity. (9) **a conspiracy**,[c] or general agreement in disobedience to God's covenant. (10) **went after**, or walked after.

Experience of depravity.—An African said to a missionary, "Yesterday morning, when you preach, you show me that the law be our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. You talk about the ten commandments. You begin at the first, and me say to myself, 'Me guilty!' the second, 'Me guilty!' the third, 'Me guilty!' the fourth, 'Me guilty!' the fifth, 'Me guilty!' Then you say the sixth, Thou shalt not kill. Me say, 'Ah! me no guilty, me never kill some person.' You say, 'I suppose plenty people live here, who say, Me no guilty of that!' Me say again in my heart, 'Ah, me no guilty!' Then you say, 'Did you never hate any person? Did you never wish that such a person, such a man, or such a woman, was dead?' Massa, you talk plenty about that: and what I feel that time I can't tell you. I talk in my heart, and say, 'Me the same person!' My heart begin to beat: me want to cry; my heart heave so much me don't know what to do. Massa, me think me kill ten people before breakfast! I never think I so bad. Afterwards you talk about the Lord Jesus, how He take off our sin. I think I stand the same like a person that have a big stone upon him head, and can't walk—want to fall down. O massa! I have trouble too much: I no sleep all night. I hope the Lord Jesus

a "2 Ki. xxiii. 15, 20. Prob. Jeremiah accompanied Josiah in his progress through the land, everywhere reading from the newly found book." — *Nägelsbach.*

b Shacham, the verb used, is properly applied to loading a camel's back, in one of its conjugations, and this was done at dawn, and hence the metaphor is peculiarly Oriental, being taken from the daily life of the sons of the desert.

c "They made some steps towards a reformation in the time of Josiah, but now they have agreed or conspired together to return back to their former idolatries."—*Lowth.*

Comp. Eze. xxii. 25; Ho. vi. 9.

Christ will take my sins from me. Suppose He no save me, I shall go to hell for ever."

11—14. (11) will bring, better, *are about to bring.* not hearken, bec. the time for judgment has fully come.[a] (12) cry . . gods, ch. ii. 28; De. xxxii. 37, 38. (13) shameful thing, Heb. *bôsheth*, shame; the name of contempt for Baal.[b] (14) pray not, ch. vii. 16.[c]

Hope against despair.—

Despair not, Virtue, who in sorrow's hour
Sigh'st to behold some idol overthrown,
And from the shade of thy domestic bower
Some green branch gone, some bird of promise flown:
God chastens but to prove thy faithfulness,
And in thy weakness He will be thy stay;
Trust and deserve, and He will soothe and bless;—
The darkest hour is on the verge of day.
Despair not, Man, however low thy state,
Nor scorn small blessings that around thee fall;
Learn to disdain the impious creed of fate,
And own the Providence that governs all.
If thou art baffled in thy earnest will,
Thy conscience clear, thy reason not astray,
Be this thy faith and consolation still.—
The darkest hour is on the verge of day.[d]

a Ps. xviii. 41; Pr. i. 28; Is. i. 15; Mi. iii. 4.

b *Wordsworth.*

"The erection of altars to Baal in every street of Jerusalem, betokens a public establishment of idolatry, such as actually took place in the reign of Manasseh."—*Spk. Com.*

c Je. xiv. 11, 12.

v. 12. *J. Weemse*, i. 82.

d *Prince.*

15—17. (15) lewdness, light regard of the marriage contract, or covenant. holy flesh, poss. a fig. for their sacrifices, wh. were unacceptable bec. of their immorality and hypocrisy. (16) green olive, *comp.* Ps. lii. 8.[a] kindled, *etc.*, fig. of the desolation wrought by the Chaldæan army. (17) planted thee, and so hath all rights in thee. evil, in the sense of calamity, which should be Divine judgment. against themselves, the sinner's sin is always to his own hurt.

Original depravity.—Now there must be some cause of this constant and universal depravity: and the sacred historian refers it to our nature itself, when he affirms that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." The word translated "youth" is not only used to denote the period of life commonly so called, but comprehends infancy also, and in the present case (Gen. viii. 21) must be thus understood; for we cannot account for it that man should be sinful "from his youth" unless the seeds of evil exist in his constitution—unless he be sinful from the commencement of his being. Such a description would not have been given if we came into the world perfectly pure, or with merely a tendency to evil, which might be checked in innumerable cases by education and a variety of circumstances. The tree must be corrupted to the core which produced corrupt fruit at first, and continues to produce it as long as it stands.[b]

a Ro. xi. 17.

A minister travelling through the west, some time ago, asked an old lady on whom he called, what she thought of the doctrine of total depravity. "Oh, sir!" she replied, "I think it is a good doctrine if people would only live up to it."

"Our birth is nothing but our death begun, as tapers waste that instant they take fire."—*Young.*

b *Dr. T. Dick.*

18—20. (18) given me knowledge, *i.e.* of the evil designs that were being plotted against the Prophet himself.[a] (19) like a lamb, the word used means a lamb that has been tamed, so as to be familiar and play with children. tree . . fruit, fig. for Jeremiah and his prophecies.[b] (20) triest the reins, *etc.*, 1 Sa. xvi. 7, etc. thy vengeance, in sense of righteous judgment.

a "Jeremiah here digresses from his main subject, in order to take special notice of the attempt wh. had been plotted upon his life by his own townsmen. It would

appear that he had not entertained the slightest suspicion of their intention, and that he must have remained ignorant of it, if it had not been immediately revealed to him by the Omniscient Searcher of hearts."—*Henderson.*

b The LXX., render, "Let us put wood (*i.e.* poison) into his bread."

c Spurgeon.

a "This was the usage the Prophets commonly met with from those who became their enemies, because they told them those truths they had no mind to hear."—*Lowth.*

b Fr. Ezr. ii. 23, Ne. vii. 27, it appears that 128 men of Anathoth returned from exile.

"All hope is lost of my reception into grace. What worse? For where no hope is left, is left no fear."—*Milton.*

c Clements.

Revealed depravity.—When the light of God's grace comes into your heart, it is something like the opening of the windows of an old cellar that has been shut up for many days. Down in that cellar, which has not been opened for many months, are all kinds of loathsome creatures, and a few sickly plants blanched by the darkness. The walls are dark, and damp by the trail of reptiles: it is a horrid filthy place, in which no one would willingly enter. You may walk there in the dark very securely, and, except now and then for the touch of some slimy creature, you would not believe the place was so bad and filthy. Open those shutters, clean a pane of glass, let a little light in, and now see how a thousand noxious things have made this place their habitation! Sure, 'twas not the light that made this place so horrible; but it was the light that showed how horrible it was before. So let God's grace just open a window, and let the light into a man's soul, and he will stand astonished to see at what a distance he is from God.*c*

21—23. (21) **prophesy not**, trying thus to frighten God's Prophet with their threats.*a* (22) **young men**, "those of the legal age for military service." **famine**, in the time of the siege. (23) **no remnant**, of those who thus sought the Prophet's life.*b* **even the year**, or in the year.

Never yield to despair.—

Art thou low, and sick, and dreary?
Is thy spirit sunk and weary
With its fight against the ills of life, that seem to fill the air?
Gird thy loins once more, and try,—
The stout heart wins the victory,
But never dark despair.

Does temptation strong approach thee?
Does some secret wrong reproach thee
With its conscious voice, accusing thee of more than thou canst bear?
Before high heaven cleanse thy breast;
Go sin no more, and thou'lt find rest,
But never in despair.

Has thy love of man grown chary?
Has thy trust in him grown wary?
Hast thou coldly turn'd a deafen'd ear to sin's repentant prayer?
Think that none can enter heaven
Who has not others' sins forgiven,
And saved them from despair.*c*

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

a "However difficult Jeremiah found it to reconcile the apparent discrepancies of the Div. government, he still held fast his conviction of the rectitude of the character of Je-

1—4. (1) **righteous art thou**, the general acknowledgment of God's justice and holiness. **yet**, *etc.*, the Prophet finds difficulty in dealing with a particular case.*a* **wherefore . . prosper?** the great question of the times of the later monarchy.*b* **happy**, by reason of their security. (2) **mouth**, *i.e.* in their professions. **reins**, regarded as the seat of the affections.*c* (3) **tried mine heart**, so as to prove my sincerity. **pull . . out**, Heb. *tear them out.*d (4) **see . . end**, this is said by the people who mock the Prophet, sure that they shall outlive all his threatenings.*e*

Doctrinal mysteries.—How unreasonable it is to reject any doctrine which is revealed to us in the Christian Scriptures, only because we are unable to comprehend how it can be! The words may be plain and evident where the doctrines which they contain are mysterious; and how much safer, and wiser, and more befitting our present condition it is to conclude that these truths are proposed by the Author of light to prove our humility and ready acquiescence in His will, to become subservient to the ends of religion by exercising the obedience of our reason, and probably in other ways which at present we cannot perceive. It is not intended that we should know everything in this present life; it is not agreeable to our notions of a state of trial that we should. Many things we must at present take for granted, upon the authority of God's Word; nor is this any juster ground of complaint than it is that a child is less acquainted with the reason of things than one of maturer age. That man acts most agreeably to his character of an imperfect and erring creature, placed in a state of discipline, who first satisfies himself that the Scriptures are indeed what they profess to be, the Word of God; and then takes in hand the sacred volume of truth with a humble and teachable mind, prepared to believe all that is therein stated, because he finds it there; and to practise all that is therein commanded, because he there discovers the sure will of God, and the motives to obedience. This it is to receive with meekness the engrafted Word.[f]

5, 6. (5) **run**, *etc.*, this is a proverbial saying, and intimates that further and higher indignities awaited the Prophet in Jerusalem.[a] **land of peace**, the open champaign country. **swellings of Jordan**, lit. *the* pride of Jordan, the thickets in the Jordan valley, abounding in wild beasts.[b] Some refer this expression to the Jordan floods.[c] (6) **brethren**, ch. ix. 4. **a multitude**, or called aloud.

Gradations of trial (*v.* 5).—Apply the text—1. To those who are discouraged in the service of God by trifling difficulties; 2. To those who have succumbed to feeble temptations; 3. To such as have desponded at the presence of slight afflictions; 4. To the large class who have failed to gain spiritual profit under favourable providences.—*The swelling of Jordan.*—I. The river Jordan an emblem of death. 1. It rolled between the desert and the Promised Land; 2. It separated the Israelites from the people of the Promised Land; 3. It must be crossed before the Promised Land be reached; 4. It was subject to occasional rise and overflow. II. The inquiry concerning our conduct in reference to the river. 1. Shall we refuse to enter? 2. Shall we rush recklessly on? 3. Shall we construct some artificial apparatus? 4. Shall we adopt the method of deliverance revealed in the Gospel? how wilt thou do?[d]

7—9. (7) **mine house**, or temple. **dearly beloved**, ch. xi. 15. **hand**, Heb. *the palm*, here especially with its power to squeeze and crush. (8) **as a lion**, a savage beast of prey, roaring against Me.[a] **hated it**, this term can only be applied to God with qualification. God cannot *hate* in the sense that man may hate. (9) **speckled bird**,[b] one differing in plumage from the others, which the other birds peck to death. By accepting heathen rites the Jews had acquired a *motley* appearance.

hovah." — *Henderson.*

b Job xxi. 7—17; Ps. xxxvii. 1—35, lxxiii. 3. 5, 7, xcii. 7; Hab. i. 13.

c Ps. vii. 9.

d "Drag them by main force out of the flock, and make examples of them, that all men may acknowledge that there is One who judgeth the earth." — *Spk. Com.*

e "It is more than this: it is the atheistical boast of the impious, in their prosperity, that God Himself would never *see* their destruction." — *Wordsworth.*

f *Bp. Blomfield.*

a "If he could not bear with the ill-usage of his acquaintance and neighbours at Anathoth, how would he be able to undergo the hardships he must expect to meet with from the great men at Jerusalem, who would unanimously set themselves against him?"—*Lowth.*

b *Henderson.*

c *Wordsworth.*

d *G. Brooks.*

a "My people have blasphemed Me and My laws, just like a wild beast, that opens its mouth against every one that withstands it."—*Lowth.*

b Heb. *tsabuang.*

a term of very uncertain signification.

c *Roberts.*

Note on v. 9.—Dr. Boothroyd, "Ravenous birds." The context confirms this rendering, and also the marginal reading, "talons." Considering the numerous birds of prey in the East, it is no wonder that there are so many allusions in the Scriptures to their ravenous propensities. Of a ferocious man it is said, "That fellow is in every place with his talons." "What! wretch, have you come hither to snatch with your talons?" "Alas! alas! how many has this disease snatched away in its talons!" "True, true, even my own children have now got talons."[c]

10—13. (10) pastors, as previously, *rulers*, here the reference is to the Chaldæan generals. trodden .. foot, doing ruinous injury to the young shoots. pleasant portion, *comp.* ch. xi. 16. (11) it mourneth, waileth in its utter desolation; the very land seeming to cry for inhabitants. (12) no flesh, as Ge. vi. 3, mankind as *sinners*. (13) to pain, the extreme labour of their idol service. revenues, or the produce of the fields.[a]

a "*Revenues* had this meaning in old time."—*Spk. Com.*

"There is a bitter irony in 'your revenues,' those revenues which ye have chosen for yourselves, in opposition to My command, and in preference to My service and favour, they shall be the cause of your shame."—*Wordsworth.*

Note on v. 10.—Besides successive invasions by foreign nations, and the systematic spoliation exercised by a despotic government, other causes have conspired to perpetuate the desolation of Judæa, and to render abortive the substance that is in it. Among these has chiefly to be numbered its being literally trodden under foot by many pastors. Volney devotes a chapter, fifty pages in length, to a description, as he entitles it, "Of the Pastoral, or Wandering Tribes of Syria," chiefly of the Bedouin Arabs, by whom especially Judæa is incessantly traversed. "The pachalics of Aleppo and Damascus may be computed to contain about thirty thousand wandering Turkmen (Turcomans). All their property consists in cattle." In the same pachalics, the number of the Curds "exceed twenty thousand tents and huts," or an equal number of armed men. "The Curds are almost everywhere looked upon as robbers. Like the Turkmen, these Curds are pastors and wanderers. A third wandering people in Syria are the Bedouin Arabs." "It often happens that even individuals turn robbers, in order to withdraw themselves from the laws, or from tyranny, unite and form a little camp, which maintain themselves by arms, and, increasing, become new hordes and new tribes. We may pronounce, that in cultivable countries the wandering life originates in the injustice or want of policy of the government; and that the sedentary and the cultivating state is that to which mankind is most naturally inclined." "It is evident that agriculture must be very precarious in such a country, and that, under a government like that of the Turks, it is safer to lead a wandering life than to choose a settled habitation, and rely for subsistence on agriculture." "The Turkmen, the Curds, and the Bedouins, have no fixed habitations, but keep perpetually wandering with their tents and herds, in limited districts, of which they look upon themselves as the proprietors. The Arabs spread over the whole frontier of Syria, and even the plains of Palestine." Thus, contrary to their natural inclination, the peasants, often forced to abandon a settled life, and pastoral tribes in great numbers, or many, and without fixed habitations, divide the country, as it were, by mutual consent, and apportion it in limited districts among themselves by an assumed right of property, and the Arabs, subdivided also into different tribes, spread over the plains of Palestine, "wandering perpetually," as if on very purpose to tread it down. What could be more unlikely or unnatural in

At a communion in the west of Scotland, as a verbose preacher was addressing the congregation, one by one his ministerial brethren dropped out of the chapel into the vestry. As the last one who left put his head into the vestry, those who preceded him inquired if the prolix speaker had not yet finished his address. "Weel," said he, "his tow's dune lang syne, but he's spinnin' awa' yet."

A Quaker once discovered a thief in his house; and, taking down his grandfather's old fowling-piece, he quietly said, "Friend, thee had better get out of the way; for I intend to fire this gun right where thee stands."

such a land! yet what more strikingly and strictly true! or how else could the effect of the vision have been seen! Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard; they have trodden my portion under foot.[b]

14—17. (14) **evil neighbours**, the nations in the vicinity of Judah, who doubtless took evil advantage of the times of her weakness and peril.[a] Syrians, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Philistines. **pluck . . Judah**, by its removal into captivity. (15) **return**, *etc.*, or I will again have compassion. These neighbours shared, in measure, with Judah in the restoration. (16) **ways . . people**, who then shall have wholly given up their idolatry. **the Lord**, or Jehovah.[b] (17) **not obey**, Is. lx. 12.

Sinful companions to be abandoned by the Christian.—Sometimes great sinners must abandon their companions. For frequently there are sins which in their very nature are so wrapped up in companionship that no man can be safe who does not break with companions as well as with courses. It is not as a general rule. I do not say that a young man, violating no canons of morality, dwelling in a virtuous home, and only with his companions worldly and sinful by the higher sentiments misappropriated, ought, when he becomes a Christian, to abandon those companions. On the contrary, he ought to be a better companion than he ever was before. But if you have been in lust's companionship, if you have been in the fiery strifes and toils of the passions, then the fire burning in your companions will not easily be slaked in you. There must be something more than a simple and barren attempt to turn away from sin. You must break with your companions.[c]

b Keith.

a "During the thirteen years that the Bab. besieged Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar, after subduing Cœla-Syria, brought Ammon, Moab, etc., and finally Egypt, into subjection." —*Fausset.*

b "The embracing of the true religion is represented as consisting in an avowal, with all the solemnity of an oath, that Jehovah alone was God." — *Henderson.*

v. 15. *Bishop O'Beirne*, ii. 441.

c C. H. Spurgeon.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1—5. (1) **unto me**, in vision. Some think this symbolical act was literally done by Jeremiah; others, with more probability, regard it as done in vision.[a] **linen girdle**, *i.e.* the inner girdle, worn next the skin. **put . . water**, *i.e.* to wash it. Let it be in its dirty state;[b] representing the "deep-grained pollution of the people." (2—4) **Euphrates**, Heb. *Phrath:* either the river of Babylon;[c] or the original name of Bethlehem, *Ephrath.*[d] It is hardly possible to conceive that Jer. went twice to the Euphrates, a distance of 200 miles. **hole**, or cleft. Typical of the Jewish captivity.

Note on v. 4.—The girdle of the Orientals is sometimes made of silver or gold, or embroidered silk, or highly dyed muslin. Its uses are, to keep the lower garments fast to the loins, to strengthen the body, and to command respect. Chiefs have numerous folds of muslin round that part, and they march along with great pomp, thus enlarged in their size. That, therefore, which was of so much use, and which indicated the dignity of the wearer, was to be marred, typifying the degradation of the Jews in their approaching captivity. The Hindoos have a custom of burying certain articles by the side of a tank or river, in order to inflict or prefigure evil in reference to certain obnoxious individuals who are thus placed under the ban. Thus eggs, human hair, thread, a ball of saffron, or a little of the earth on

a "The world the Troph. moved in was not the sensible, but the spiritual world. Inward acts were, however, when it was possible and proper, materialised by outward performance, but not always and necessarily so." —*Fausset.*

b "Jeremiah was to wear it constantly, though full of the effects of perspiration, and never to wash it."—*Maurer.*

c Spk. Com.; Wordsworth, etc.

d Henderson, Hitzig, etc.

which the devoted person has had his feet, are buried in the situations alluded to.[e]

6—11. (6) after many days, during wh. the girdle, left in the damp, would become mouldy, and quite unfit for use.[a] (7) digged, wh. intimates that the girdle had been actually buried in the soil. (8, 9) the pride, *i.e.* the temporal grandeur. The Jews returned fr. Bab. as a very feeble folk. (10) evil people, as being self-willed. The expression limits the application of this symbol. (11) cleave to me,[b] the inner girdle is the closest cleaving part of a man's dress.

Contempt of God's mercies (*r.* 11).—I. The honour which God has designed for His people; the primary use of the girdle is to bind up the garments around the loins, but a girdle is also of use for ornament. II. The way in which this honour is contemned by the Jews. What can be a more just description of ourselves? Address—1. In the way of appeal; 2. In a way of encouragement.[c]

12—14. (12) bottle . . wine, bottles were used for holding various liquids; what Jer. asserts here is, that the bottle shall be filled with *wine*, wh. is the symbol of the *wrath of God*.[a] certainly know, the language of sneering and derision. (13) with drunkenness, the ruin of those who have drunk the wrath of God.[b] (14) dash them, as drunken men tumble one against another. In drunkenness men will injure their own wives and children.[c]

The drunkard's thraldom.—The writer of the pamphlet entitled "The Confessions of a Drunkard," says, "Of my condition there is no hope that I should ever change; the waters have gone over me; but out of the black depths, could I be heard, I would cry aloud to all those who have set a foot in that perilous flood. Could the youth to whom the flavour of his first wine is as delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering upon some newly-discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will,—to see his destruction, and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all the way emanating from himself: to perceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own ruin:—could he see my fevered eye, feverish with the last night's drinking, and feverishly looking forward for this night's repetition of the folly: could he feel the body of death out of which I cry hourly, with feebler and feebler outcry, to be delivered, it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation."[d]

15—18. (15) not proud, so as to reject the teaching of these symbols, though they are given in humiliating forms. (16) give glory, by making confession, Jos. vii. 19. darkness, Is. viii. 20. dark mountains, where travelling is perilous.[a] gross darkness, De. xxviii. 29. (17) weep in secret, indicating that he would, in sorrow, retire from pleading any longer with them. "Touching expressions of tender, hopeless grief." (18) king, Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah. queen, or queen-mother, *Nehushta*.[b] principalities, marg. *head-tires*.

e Roberts.

a "To that condition the Jews had been reduced by the corrupting idolatries of the heathen. They had disqualified themselves for acting as witnesses for Jehovah as the only true God, and like a cast-away girdle, they were to be humbled and rejected." — *Henderson.*
b Ex. xix. 5, 6; De. iv. 7; Ps. cxxxv. 4.
c C. Simeon, M.A.

a Je. xxv. 15; Is. xxviii. 7; Eze. xxiii. 31.
"God's judgments are often represented under the fig. of a cup full of intoxicating liquor."—*Lowth.*
b "As wine intoxicates so God's wrath and judgments shall reduce them to that state of helpless distraction that they shall rush on their own ruin."—*Fausset.*
c Eze. v. 10; Mat. x. 21.

vv. 12—17. *Origen, Op.* iii. 193.
The wisest habit is the habit of care in the formation of habits.
d Cheever.

a "The metaphor is taken from the dangers to which travellers are exposed who, in a dark and stormy night, cross mountain regions, where they are liable at every step to stumble against

Pride (*v.* 15).—I. Different kinds of pride. 1. Race pride—pride in ancestors: 2. Face pride—pride in outward appearance; 3. Place pride—pride in social position; 4. Grace pride—pride in godliness. II. The warning. Be not proud—1. Because we have nothing to be proud of; 2. Because it is abhorrent to God; 3. Because it is unlike Christ; 4. Because it is ruinous. Apply:—(1) Some are very proud; (2) Some occasionally; (3) Some are bravely struggling against pride.[c]

Note on v. 18.—The margin has instead of "principalities," "or head tires." This again alludes to the threatened judgments which were to befall the people and their rulers. Dr. Boothroyd has, instead of "principalities," "the diadem of your glory." Of a proud man who treats another with contempt it is said. "Ah! his turban will soon fall." "Yes, imperious upstart! thy head-dress will soon come down." "Have you heard of the proud wife of Kandan?" "No." "Her head ornaments have fallen; she is humbled." "Ah," says the bereaved father over the dead body of his son, "my crown is fallen! my crown is fallen." When men quarrel, it is common for the one to say to the other, "I will beat thee till thy turban fall." When they fight, the great object of the combatants is to pull off each other's turban or head-dress, because it shows that the individual is then disgraced and humbled. The feelings of a man who has his turban knocked off his head are probably something like those which are produced by the knocking off of a man's wig. For the turban to fall off the head by accident is considered to be a very bad omen. Jehoiakim and his queen were to have their "head tires" brought down; they were to be humbled on account of their sins.[d]

19—22. (19) cities . . south, *i.e.* of the Negeb, or southern district of Judah. shut up, as besieged. This indicates that the invader would overrun the whole country. (20) flock, fig. for the cities grouped round Jerusalem. They are suddenly and wholly swept away by the enemy. (21) taught . . captains, *i.e.* thine own seeking aid from these Assyrians rather than from thy God, has really given them the mastery over thee.[a] (22) wherefore, *etc.*, ch. v. 19, xvi. 10.

God's retributive justice (*v.* 21).—I. Let us endeavour to establish the doctrine that retributive justice belongs to God. II. This will lead us to assail your hope of impunity from it. 1. The first foundation of the sinner's hope is derivable from God's delay; 2. Prosperity; 3. The mercy of God. III. We proceed to answer the question. 1. Wilt thou say, I do not deserve the condemnation? 2. Or, I was not warned? 3. Or, There was no way of escape?[b]

23, 24. (23) Ethiopian, the African negro, whose skin is nearly black.[a] accustomed, practised, so that evil has become the settled habit. (24) stubble, left from the thrashing. wind . . wilderness, wh. has nothing to hinder its full sweep.

The alarming power of sin (*v.* 23).—The long-continued impenitence of men augments the difficulties in the way of their salvation. I. The habits of men are strengthened and confirmed by indulgence. II. The influence of this world, as men advance in life, usually becomes more perplexing, and a greater hindrance to their conversion. III. As years increase, men become less

some projecting angle of a rock, and so be precipitated into the abyss below."—*Henderson.*

b 2 Ki. xxiv. 8—15. "The Heb. kings generally married women who were not of royal race, but were subjects; they had also *many* wives. Hence the position of a *Queen Consort* was an inferior one, but that of a Queen *Mother* was one of considerable influence."—*Wordsworth.* v. 15. *Dr. N. Brady*, ii. 129. v. 16. *Bp. Taylor*, v. 462; *R. Erskine*, vi. 389; *Dr. R. Graves*, iv. 581; *C. Bullen*, 204.

c J. Bolton.

d Roberts.

a "When Ahaz made himself tributary to the king of Assyria, he taught the Assyrs. how they might become masters and conquerors over his own country, whenever they pleased."—*Lowth.*

b W. Jay.

a A *Cushite* of Africa, not of Arabia.

"Habit is second nature: as therefore it is morally impossible that the Jews can alter their inveterate habits of sin, nothing remains but the

infliction of the extremest punishment. their expiration." — *Faussat.*

Pr. xxvii. 22 ; Is. i. 5 ; Mat. xix. 24.

v. 23. *Dr. T. Horton*, 390; *Dr. Conant*, i. 59; *Abp. Tillotson*, ii. 291; *J. Abernethy*, iv. 296; *P. Skelton*, ii. 214; *Dr. J. Jortin*, 78; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 133; *Bp. D. Wilson*, 405.

b Dr. G. Spring.

How difficult it is for an individual to change his character is well set forth in the Eastern proverb, "If any one tells you that a mountain has changed its place, believe it; but if any one says that a man has changed his character, believe it not."

There are four good habits—punctuality, accuracy, steadiness, and despatch. Without the first of these time is wasted; without the second, mistakes the most hurtful to our own credit and interest, and that of others, may be committed; without the third nothing can be well done; and without the fourth, opportunities of great advantage are lost, which it is impossible to recall.

"It is very true that precepts are useful, but practice and imitation go far beyond them; hence the interested in the subject of religion, and more obdurate and averse to any alteration in their moral character. IV. The thought of multiplied and long-continued transgression is very apt to discourage all attempts at repentance. V. There is awful reason to apprehend that God will leave men of this description to perish in their sins. Apply—(1) To the aged; (2) Those in middle life; (3) To the young.[b]

A Persian poem.—

Plant in Eden's fair garden a bitter-fruit tree ;
Let its waters of heavenly purity be,
Let rich dropping honey bedew the young root,—
Still, still you will find that bitter's the fruit.
Bring the heavenly peacock, and cause it to brood
O'er the egg of a raven, and then let the food
Of the nestling be fig-seeds from Eden's fair tree,
And let Gabriel breathe on it—holy is he !
Let it drink of the water of sweet Salsebil—
What does it avail ? 'Tis a hoarse raven still
Deposit a viper in that rosy bed,
With the choicest of luxuries let it be fed,—
Is it tamed by your kindness, or softened its spite ?
Oh, no ! it turns on you with venomous bite.
By night bring an owl to your elegant bowers,
Let it perch on the rose-bushes, sport with the flowers;
But as soon as the day spreads its wings on the sky,
So soon will the owl stretch its pinions to fly,
And seek the tall forest, in darkness to lie.
So sure as our garments catch odorous smell
In a shop of rich perfume—and so far 'tis well—
They will borrow as surely a dark, dusky hue
If we stand by a forge—you allow this is true.
Then wonder no more if a dark, evil deed,
From a dark, evil man should spontaneous proceed.
No more can the Ethiop make himself white,
Than a soul of mean birth can emerge into light,
And show itself generous, noble, and wise,—
So let not the poets throw dust in our eyes.

Power of early habits.—"In North America a tribe of Indians attacked a white settlement and murdered the few inhabitants. A woman of the tribe, however, carried away a very young infant and reared it as her own. The child grew up with the Indian children, different in complexion, but like them in everything else. To scalp the greatest possible number of enemies was, in his view, the most glorious and happy thing in the world. While he was still a youth, he was seen by some white traders, and by them conducted back to civilised life. He showed great relish for his new life, and especially a strong desire for knowledge, and a sense of reverence, which took the direction of religion, so that he desired to become a clergyman. He went through his college course with credit, and was ordained. He filled his functions well, and appeared happy and satisfied. After a few years he went to serve in a settlement somewhere near the seat of war which was then going on between Britain and the United States; and before long there was fighting not far off. I am not sure," says Miss Martineau, "whether he was aware that there were Indians in the field (the British having some

tribes of Indians for allies), but he went forth in his usual dress, black coat and neat white shirt and neckcloth. When he returned he was met by a gentleman of his acquaintance, who was immediately struck by an extraordinary change in the expression of his face, and the fire of his eye, and the flush on his cheek; and also by his unusually shy and hurried manner. After asking news of the battle, the gentleman observed, 'But you are wounded!—No; not wounded? Why, there is blood upon the bosom of your shirt!' The young man crossed his hands firmly, though hurriedly, upon his breast; and his friend, supposing that he wished to conceal a wound which ought to be looked to, pulled open his shirt, and saw—what made the young man let fall his hands in despair. From between his shirt and his breast the gentleman took out—a bloody scalp! 'I could not help it,' said the poor victim of early habits, in an agonised voice. He turned and ran, too swiftly to be overtaken; betook himself to the Indians, and never more appeared among the whites."[c]

portance of watching early habits, that they may be free from what is objectionable; and of keeping before our mind, as much as possible, the necessity of imitating the good and the wise; without settled principle and practical virtue, life is a desert; without Christian piety, the contemplation of the grave is terrible."—*Sir Wm. Knighton.*

c Miss Martineau.

25—27. (25) measures, *i.e.* the allotted and adopted portion which I have measured out to thee. (26) shame may appear, with allusion to the public disgrace of the proved adulteress. (27) abominations, the shameless ceremonies and orgies of heathen and idolatrous religions.[a] when . . be? marg. "after when yet?" "Thou wilt not be made clean after how long a time yet?"

God's desire to bless the sinner (*v.* 27).—I. Man's uncleanness—1. In heart: 2. In life; 3. In religion. II. God's desire that he should be clean. III. His expostulation with us. IV. Our refusal. V. God's condemnation.[b]

a Comp. Je. ii. 20, 23, 24, iii. 2, 6.

"Men blush less for their crimes than for their weaknesses and vanity."—*Bruyère.*

b Dr. H. Bonar.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

1—6. (1) dearth, or drought,[a] ch. xvii. 8. (2) gates, put for the people who congregate in the gates. black . . ground, with the clothing and in the attitude of mourners. (3) little ones, or common ones, servants. pits, cisterns for preserving the rainfall. covered their heads, the sign of uttermost distress.[b] (4) chapt,[c] cracked with the dryness. (5) forsook it, bec. finding herself unable to feed it.[d] (6) snuffed, *etc.*, trying to get scent of grass and water somewhere.

Note on v. 4.—The description that Sir J. Chardin gives us of the state of these countries, with respect to the cracking of the earth, before the autumnal rains fell, is so lively a comment on Jer. xiv. 4, that I beg leave to introduce it here as a distinct observation. The lands of the East, he says, which the great dryness there causes to crack, are the ground of this figure, which is certainly extremely beautiful; for those dry lands have chinks too deep for a person to see to the bottom of; this may be observed in the Indies more than anywhere, a little before the rains fall, and wherever the lands are rich and hard. The Prophet's speaking of ploughmen shows that he is speaking of the autumnal state of those countries: and if the cracks are so deep from the common dryness of their summers, what must they be when the rains are withheld beyond their usual time,

a Heb. *batsaroth*, or restraint. Here plural, restraints.

"The heaven being restrained fr. giving rain, and the earth being restrained fr. bearing fruit, and the people being reduced to great straitness and distress."—*Wordsworth.*

"At the present day Jerus. has only one fountain, that of Siloam. A lack of rain not only produces a dearth of crops, but a failure of water to drink."—*S. Jerome.*

b 2 Ga. xv. 30, xix. 4.

c D. *kappen*, Sw. *kappa*, to cut, cut off. Our word *chap*, means to crack, or open in long slits.

d "These creatures are very sharp-sighted; and travellers in the desert frequently avail themselves of their appearance, knowing that there must be herbage and water in the vicinity."—*Henderson.*

a Ps. cix. 21.

b 2 Chr. xxxiii. 7, 8.

c Arab. To come suddenly on anyone; to confound, strike dumb.

v. 7. *T. Boston*, iv. 195; *T. Scott*, v. 381; *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 322; *C. Bradley*, i. 241; *Abp. Leighton*, iii. 390.

v. 8. *J. Willison*, 457; *T. Blackley*, ii. 48.

d *Stems and Twigs.*

a "It appears from this *v.* that the people had again engaged in the external service of Jehovah, in the hope that this would avert His anger, but as they were not really weaned fr. idolatry, it is declared to be in vain."—*Henderson.*

Pr. i. 28, xxviii. 9; Is. i. 15, lviii. 3.

v. 10. *Bishop G. Williams*, 87.

b *Teachers' Treas.*

a *Syk. Com.*

v. 14. *J. Boys*, 152.

"The proud he tamed, the penitent he cheered, nor to rebuke the rich offender fear'd; his preaching much, but more his practice wrought

which is the case Jeremiah is referring to? This refers to a drought which was to take place in Judah. At such times, in the East, the ground is "chapt;" large fissures meet your eye in every direction, and the husbandmen are then ashamed and put to confusion: they know not what to do; to plough the land under such circumstances is of no use, and therefore they are obliged to wait till it shall rain. Thus, should the rains be later than usual, the people are daily looking for them, and after one night's fall, the farmers may be seen in every direction working in their fields with the greatest glee, in the full hope of soon casting in the seed.

7—9. (7) do thou, or act Thou in consideration of Thy merciful name, not of our deserts.[a] (8) hope of Israel, whose future rests on the Divine promise and covenant. stranger, who concerns himself but little with the affairs of the land. wayfaring man, a mere traveller. The people as little heeded God as they did the mere passing stranger or traveller. God *dwelt* with them.[b] turneth aside, or stretcheth out his tent. (9) astonied,[c] and so losing presence of mind.

A prayer for all seasons (*v.* 9).—I. Here is a prayer for all seasons. 1. Times of joy; 2. Of adversity; 3. Of labour; 4. Of perplexity, etc. II. Here is a prayer for all saints. 1. All need to pray thus; 2. All must pray thus; 3. All will pray thus. III. Here is a prayer always answered. 1. For it is according to His will; 2. For it honours His name.[d]

10—12. (10) loved to wander, not merely, they do wander, but they love it: and persistently choose the evil way. (11) pray not, ch. vii. 16. (12) oblation, Heb. *minchah*, a meat-offering.[a]

The wages of sin.—A certain tyrant sent for one of his subjects, and said to him, "What is your employment?" He said, "I am a blacksmith." "Go home and make me a chain of such a length." He went home; it occupied him several months, and he had no wages all the time he was making it. Then he brought it to the monarch, who said, "Go and make it twice as long." He brought it up again, and the monarch said, "Go and make it longer still." Each time he brought it there was nothing but the command to make it longer still. And when he brought it up at last, the monarch said, "Take it and bind him hand and foot with it, and cast him into a furnace of fire." These were the wages for making this chain. "The wages of sin is death."[b]

13—16. (13) ah, Lord God, ch. i. 6. assured peace, lasting, settled peace. (14) lies, their statements can only deceive. divination, Dt. xviii. 10. thing of nought, Heb. *elil*, a diminutive of *el*, God, signifies a small idol made of the more precious metals.[a] See ch. xxiii. 21. (15) therefore, *etc.*, ch. v. 12, 13. (16) none to bury, Ps. lxxix. 3.

Faithless minister.—

Most guilty, villanous, dishonest man!
Wolf in the clothing of the gentle lamb!
Dark traitor in the Messiah's holy camp!
Leper in saintly garb! assassin masked
In virtue's robe! vile hypocrite accursed!
I strive in vain to set his evil forth!
The words that should sufficiently accurse

And execrate such reprobate, had need
Come glowing from the lips of eldest hell.
Among the saddest in the den of woe,
Thou saw'st him saddest 'mong the damned now damned.[b]

17—22. (17) let, *etc.*, ch. xiii. 17; Ja. i. 16, ii. 18. virgin daughter, as never having been previously subdued by any foreign prince. (18) go about into, go into exile in a strange land.[a] (19) lothed, or thrown away as worthless. (20) have sinned, the cry of the penitent people.[b] (21) disgrace, or show as if Thou didst lightly esteem. throne .. glory, fig. for the temple, as earthly dwelling of God. (22) vanities, or idols. thou he, who alone canst send the plentiful rain.

How to plead with God (*vv.* 20, 21).—We propose—I. To explain this prayer of the Prophet; his acknowledgments are plain and easy to be understood; his pleas require some explanation. II. To point out some important lessons contained in it. 1. The true nature of a sinner's humiliation; 2. The proper grounds of a sinner's encouragement. Apply:—(1) Have you ever pleaded with God in this manner? (2) Have you ever pleaded thus with God in vain?[c]

Note on v. 22.—There are persons among the South African nations who pretend to have power to bring rain in times of drought, and who are called rain-makers. A nation seldom employs their own rain-maker, but generally thinks those at a distance have more power to produce it than those at home. A rain-maker, from high up the country, once travelled with my party for a few weeks. I asked him seriously, if he really believed that he had power to bring rain when he pleased? His reply was, that he could not say he had, but he used means to bring it; such as rolling great stones down the sides of mountains, to draw down the clouds. A rain-maker at Lattakoo who was unsuccessful, first said it was because he had not got sufficient presents of cattle. He then desired them first to bring him a live baboon; hundreds tried but could not catch one. He next demanded a live owl, but they could not find one. No rain coming they called him rogue, impostor, etc., and ordered him away.[d]

—a living sermon of the truths he taught."—*Dryden.*

b Pollock.

a "Lit. as itinerant merchants travelling for the sake of gain."—*Gesenius.*

"The result of their covetousness will be this, that they will be obliged to wander to and fro, as pedlars and hucksters, in a strange land, which they know not, and which will not deign to know them."—*Wordsworth.*

b Is. cvi. 6; Da. ix. 8.

v. 21. *J. Howe,* ii. 445.

v. 22. *E. Barry,* 33.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"Nothing is so haughty and assuming as ignorance, where self-conceit bids it set for infallibility."—*South.*

d Campbell.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

1—4. (1) Moses and Samuel, the most persuasive and successful of all the previous intercessors.[a] Comp. Eze. xiv. 14. cast .. sight, or send them away: it is too late for any answer of peace. (2) such .. death, *etc.*, *i.e.* each to the various form of Divine judgment under wh. they must come.[b] (3) kinds, or classes of calamity. (4) removed, *etc.*, De. xxviii. 25. Manasseh, 2 Ki. xxi. 3.

Note on v. 3.—An Oriental enemy, as in former ages, cuts down the trees of the country which he invades, destroys the villages, and burns all the corn and provender which he cannot carry off: the surrounding plain, deprived of its verdure, is covered with putrid carcases and burning ashes; the hot wind wafting its fœtid odours, and dispersing the ashes among the tents, renders his encampment extremely disagreeable. During the night the hyenas, jackals, and wild beasts of various kinds, allured by the

a Ex. xxxii. 11—14; Nu. xiv. 13—20; 1 Sa. vii. 9, xii. 23; Ps. xcix. 6.

b Intimating that for each the sentence has been pronounced, and it only awaits execution.

Death here is the plague. The plague in the Middle Ages was called the "black death."

"The cruelty of the effeminate is more dreadful than that of the hardy."—*Lavater.*

c *Paxton.*

a "Thy sins render thee unworthy of pity, and everybody that sees the calamities brought upon thee will own them to be just."—*Lowth.*

b *Fausset.*

v. 9. *R. Hall*, v. 1.

c *W. J. Stuart.*

d *Roberts.*

"Much more may a judge overweigh himself in cruelty than in clemency."—*Sir P. Sidney.*

e *Ibid.*

a Comp. Job iii. 1; Je. xx. 15.

b Thy *loosing* or *deliverance.*

Je. xl. 4.

"The sweet words of Christian promise, words that even yet might stem destruction, were they wisely preach'd, are muttered o'er by men whose tones proclaim how flat and wearisome they feel their trade; rank scoffers some, but most too indolent to deem them falsehoods, or to know their truth."—*Coleridge.*

"This law is the magistrate of a scent, prowl over the field with a horrid noise; and as soon as the morning dawns, a multitude of vultures, kites, and birds of prey, are seen asserting their claim to a share of the dead. Such was the scene which Forbes contemplated on the plains of Hindostan; "and it was to me," says that writer, "a scene replete with horrid novelty, realising the Prophet's denunciation: 'I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord; the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy.'"[c]

5—9. (5) ask . . doest? or make inquiry for thy welfare.[a] "They that pass by will even exult over thy calamities." (6) gone backward, ch. vii. 24. (7) fan, or winnow them, as the corn is winnowed. (8) widows . . sea, a strong poetical fig.; not to be pressed literally. young men, the word means, *picked warriors.* (9) sun . . day, Am. viii. 9. "Fortune deserts her at the very height of her prosperity."[b]

The Christian's sun (*v.* 9).—I. The Christian has a sun, so have all men. 1. But with some it is nature, traditions of the fathers, priestly agency, sacramental efficacy, fancied superior morality; 2. Of the Christian is Jesus as set forth in Holy Writ. II. The Christian is sunnified by his Sun. III. The Christian sunnifies others: he reflects and spreads the brightness of his Sun. Apply—1. To sinners; 2. To saints; 3. To Christian workers.[c]

Note on v. 7.—When the cholera or any other pestilence rages, it is said, "Alas! this sickness has fanned the people away." "Truly they have been suddenly fanned from the earth." See on Isa. xxx. 24.[d]—*Note on v.* 9.—Of a person who is dead, it is said, "He is set," and of one dying, "He is setting." Should a beautiful young man or woman be reduced by sickness, it is said, "He is like the evening, which is occupying the place of the morning!"[e]

10—14. (10) woe is me,[a] the Prophet here expresses his own sorrowful feelings. strife . . contention, called to reprove publicly the licentiousness of the times. lent on usury, fig. way of saying that he had no causes of personal quarrel. (11) thy remnant,[b] either, the latter part of Jer.'s life, or with those of his family who should survive him. (12) iron, fig. for Jer.'s intercession. northern iron, fig. for Chaldæans. steel, should be *brass.* (13) thy substance, not Jer.'s, but that of Judæa. without price, without allowing any ransom-price; or, as if it were all of no value. (14) fire, *etc.*, De. xxxii. 22.

Dr. Arnold (of Rugby).—We listened, as all boys in their better moods will listen (ay, and men too, for the matter of that), to a man who we felt to be, with all his heart and soul and strength, striving against whatever was mean and unmanly and unrighteous in our little world. It was not the cold clear voice of one giving advice and warning from serene heights to those who were struggling and sinning below, but the warm living voice of one who was fighting for us, and by our sides, and calling on us to help him and ourselves, and one another. And so, wearily, little by little, but surely and steadily on the whole, was brought home to the young boy, for the first time, the meaning of his life: that it was no fool's or sluggard's paradise into which he

had wandered by chance, but a battle-field ordained from of old, where there are no spectators, but the youngest must take his side, and the stakes are the life and death. And he who roused this consciousness in them, showed them at the same time, by every word he spoke in the pulpit, and by his whole daily life, how that battle was to be fought; and stood there before them their fellow-soldier and the captain of their band. The true sort of captain, too, for a boy's army, one who had no misgivings and gave no uncertain word of command, and, let who would yield or make truce, would fight the fight out (so every boy felt) to the last gasp and the last drop of blood. Other sides of his character might take hold of and influence boys here and there, but it was this thoroughness and undaunted courage which more than anything else won his way to the hearts of the great mass of those on whom he left his mark, and made them believe first in him, and then in his Master.[c]

15—18. (15) **remember me**, Jer.'s intense expostulation, and prayer. There is something of impatience in its tone. (16) **eat them**, Eze. iii. 3; Re. x. 9. (17) **alone**, in the separation of deep feeling. (18) **pain perpetual**, figs. for his exceeding grief in his hopeless mission. **liar**, or as a deceitful brook, whose waters fail in time of need.

The Word of God precious (*v.* 16).—I. How the Word of God should be received. 1. It is necessary for all: 2. Suitable for all; 3. Sufficient for all. II. What effect it will produce. 1. Its declarations; 2. Its precepts; 3. Its promises; 4. Its threatenings. May we not learn hence—(1) What enemies to their own souls they are who neglect the Holy Scriptures; (2) What an unspeakable blessing is the Bible Society.[a]—*Soul-feeding* (*v.* 16).—I. The grandest discovery, "Thy words were found." 1. Explain the universe; 2. They reveal Himself; 3. They reveal His redemptive provisions. II. The richest repast. 1. They satisfy the cravings of hunger; 2. They invigorate the soul. III. The sublimest delights.[b]

Henry Martyn.—"What do I not owe to the Lord," writes Henry Martyn, "for permitting me to take a part in the translation of His Word? Never did I see such wonders, and wisdom, and love, in the blessed book, as since I have been obliged to study every expression; and it is a delightful reflection that death cannot deprive us of the pleasure of studying its mysteries."—*Dr. Buchanan.*—The same testimony was given by a kindred spirit employed in the same work. Shortly before his death, Dr. Buchanan, giving to a friend some details of his laborious revisions of his Syriac Testament, suddenly stopped, and burst into tears. On recovering himself, he said, "I am not ill, but I was completely overcome with the recollection of the delight which I have enjoyed in this exercise. At first I was disposed to shrink from the task as irksome, and apprehended that I should find even the Scriptures pall by the frequency of this critical examination. But so far from it, every fresh perusal seemed to throw fresh light on the Word of God, and to convey additional joy and consolation to my mind." "How delightful," observes his biographer, "is the contemplation of a servant of Christ thus devoutly engaged in his heavenly Master's work, almost to the very moment of his transition to the Divine source of life and truth itself!"

man's life. It is not the pilot directing the vessel; it is the vessel abandoned to the force of the current, the influence of the tides, and the control of the winds."—*Joseph Johnson.*

c *Hughes.*

a *C. Simeon, M.A.*

b *Dr. Thomas.*

"Though numberless dreps be in the sea, yet if one be taken out of it, it hath so much the less, though insensibly; but God, because He is Infinite, can admit of no diminution: therefore are men niggardly, because the more they give, the less they have; but Thou, Lord, mayst give what Thou wilt, without abatement of Thy store. Good prayers never came weeping home. I am sure I shall receive either what I ask or what I should ask."—*Bp. Hall.*

"I adore the fulness of the Scriptures," was the exclamation of Tertullian. "In which posture of holy admiration," said Dr. Owen, "I desire my mind may be found while I am in this world."

19—21. (19) return, to thy duty as prophet: from this Jer. seems for a time to have shrunk in his hopelessness. precious . . vile, "cause the precious metal to come forth from the dross."[a] (20) brasen wall, ch. i. 18, vi. 27. (21) the terrible, those even who act towards thee with violence.

Ministerial obligations (*v.* 19).—I. We have a Divine admonition as to personal religion. II. We have also a Divine direction. III. We have a Divine caution.[b]

Waters that fail (*v.* 18).—Heb. "Waters that are not to be trusted," *i.e.* such as are delusive, such as disappoint expectation. That which Mr. Harmer proposes simply as a query, may be stated as a very probable suggestion, viz. that in these words the Prophet alludes to the phenomenon of the mirage, so frequently mentioned by Eastern travellers. "There is," says Chardin, "a vapour or splendour, in the plains of the desert, formed by the repercussion of the rays from the sand, that appears like a vast lake. Travellers afflicted with thirst are drawn on by such appearances, but coming near find themselves mistaken: it seems to draw back as they advance, or quite vanishes." "To the south-east, at a distance of four or five miles, we noticed on the yellow sands two black masses, but whether they were the bodies of dead camels, the temporary hair-tents of wandering Bedouins, or any other objects, magnified by the refraction which is so strongly produced in the horizon of the desert, we had no means of ascertaining. With the exception of these masses, all the eastern range of vision presented only one unbroken waste of sand, till its visible horizon ended in the illusive appearance of a lake, thus formed by the heat of a midday sun on a nitrous soil, giving to the parched desert the semblance of water, and reflecting its scanty shrubs upon the view, like a line of extensive forests; but in no direction was either a natural hill, a mountain, or other interruption to the level line of the plain, to be seen."[c] "We have suffered very much from the fatigue of this day's journey, and have still five days' march through this waterless desert. The only object to interest us, and relieve the weariness of mind and body, has been the mirage so often described. Some travellers state that this phenomenon has deceived them repeatedly. This I am surprised at, since its peculiar appearance, joined to its occurrence in a desert, where the traveller is too forcibly impressed with the recollection that no lakes or standing pools exist, would appear to me to prevent the possibility, that he who has once seen it, can be a second time deceived. Still, this does not diminish the beauty of the phenomenon: to see amid burning sands and barren hills, an apparently beautiful lake, perfectly calm and unruffled by any breeze, reflecting in its bosom the surrounding rocks, is, indeed, an interesting and wonderful spectacle; but it is a tantalising sight, traversing the desert on foot, always with a scanty supply of water, and often, owing to their great imprudence, wholly destitute of it."[d]—*The drought in Persia.*—A correspondent of the *Levant Herald* says:—"The details which reach us here of the destitution and misery which the drought of last year has caused in the central and southern provinces of Persia are fearfully heartrending. That the people are dying of hunger even in the streets of the capital is a minor phase of this terrible calamity. In Khorassan parents are selling their children as slaves to the Turcomans in

a Spk. Com.

"Let thine adversaries give up their error for thy truth; but do not thou give up thy truth to their error."—*Wordsworth.*

"Do not thou comply with their humour, or study to soothe them in their wickedness; but rather endeavour, by wholesome reproofs, to turn them from the error of their ways."—*Lowth.*

"There are many things that appear very *frightful* that yet do not prove at all *hurtful* to a good man." — *Matt. Henry.*

vv. 19, 20 *Dr. J. Owen, xv.* 157.

b Dr. W. Wilson.

c Buckingham.

"The joy of the wicked is but for a moment; that of the righteous is everlasting. The wicked rejoice; but their joy is simply like letting off fireworks,—they blaze away, and seem to put the modest little stars to shame. But it is all for a little while: they are over in a moment, while the quiet stars are shining still."—*Rev. T. Jones.*

d Hoskins.

order to keep them alive, and in Ispahan, as is said, men have been seized in the act of digging up the corpses to serve as food for their starving families. In Shiraz-Kerman and Verd the wretched sufferers endeavour to support life on the grass and roots which they may find in the neighbourhood, and, as might be expected, pestilence follows hard on the footsteps of famine. Between them the half of the kingdom of Persia is being rapidly depopulated.

"Life's road from youth had lain through grief and gloom, and every milestone was a loved one's tomb."—*Household Words.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

1—4. (1, 2) **not . . wife,** marriage was regarded as a duty by the Jews, and the blessings of the Mosaic law rested upon fruitfulness.[a] In commanding Jer. not to take a wife God intimated that during the impending calamities it would be impossible to bring up families: they would only increase the anxieties of siege and famine times. **this place,** the land of Judæa. (3) **mothers . . fathers,** who are so deeply affected when calamities come upon their children. (4) **grievous deaths,**[b] by disease, famine, and sword. Deaths having most distressful features for parents. **lamented,** with the usual wailings for the dead.

Marrying unbelievers.—The Rev. S. Kilpin, of Exeter, had witnessed the awful consequences produced in the Church of Christ, and in families, from those who professed to be the disciples of Jesus, forming marriages contrary to the command.—"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," "only in the Lord," etc. As he never shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, this subject was presented to his congregation. The next day, a gentleman, whose name or residence he never knew, called to thank him for the discourse, adding, that his state of mind when he entered Exeter was most distressing, as he was on the very point of complying with a dreadful temptation, which would have embittered his future life. He had been a disciple of Christ, was anxious to consecrate his life to the service of his adorable Master, and had sought a helpmate to strengthen his hands in serving God. A lady, whom he deemed pious, had accepted his addresses; but when every customary arrangement was made, she had dishonourably discarded him. His mind was so exceedingly wounded and disgusted, that he had determined to choose a wife who made no profession of religion, and had fixed on another object for his addresses, with every prospect of success, although he had not as yet mentioned his intention to her. He added, "But the providence of God led me, an entire stranger in this city, to your meeting-house. You may suppose that your subject arrested my attention. You appeared to be acquainted with every feeling of my soul. I saw my danger, and perceived the temptation, and the certain ruin of my peace, if the dreadful snare had not been broken. You, sir, under God, have been my deliverer. By the next Sabbath I should have been bound in honour to an enemy of that Jesus whom I adore: for although she is moral and externally correct, yet she knows the Saviour only in name. I could not leave the city in peace until I had sought to make this communication." They unitedly addressed Him who can deliver, and does deliver His people.

[a] De. xxviii. 4.

[b] "By those many maladies which follow in the track of war and famine."—*Spk. Com.*

"Though bachelors be the strongest stakes, married men are the best binders, in the hedge of the commonwealth. It is the policy of the Londoners, when they send a ship into the Levant or Mediterranean Sea, to make every mariner therein a merchant, each seaman venturing somewhat of his own, which will make him more wary to avoid, and more valiant to undergo dangers. Thus married men, especially if having posterity, are the deeper sharers in that State wherein they live, which engageth their affections to the greater loyalty."—*Fuller.*

The Cherokee marriage-ceremony is very expressive. The man and woman join hands over running water to indicate that their lives are thenceforth to flow on in one stream.

Thus, while part of his congregation thought it an unfit subject for the pulpit, at least one person received it as a message from God, by whom it was no doubt sent.[e]

5—8. (5) **house of mourning,** as if you were going to a mourning feast. Intimating that the general distress would permit no such feasts as were usual at funerals.[a] (6) **cut themselves,** *etc.*, Le. xix. 28; De. xiv. 1. This was a heathen custom, wh. it seems the Jews had adopted with their idolatry.[b] **make . . bald,** shave a bare patch on the front of the head.[c] (7) **tear themselves,** marg. "break bread for them:" see *v.* 5. **cup of consolation,** it was the custom to force food and drink upon mourners, who, in their first grief, often fasted from all food. (8) **house of feasting,** *v.* 5.

Blessing in mourning.—

Deem not that they are blest alone
Whose lives a peaceful tenor keep;
For God, who pities man, has shown
A blessing for the eyes that weep.

The light of smiles shall fill again
The lids that overflow with tears;
And weary hours of woe and pain
Are promises of happier years.

There is a day of sunny rest
For every dark and troubled night;
Though grief may bide an evening guest,
Yet joy shall come with early light.

Nor let the good man's trust depart,
Though life its common gifts deny;
Though with a pierced and broken heart,
And spurned of men, he goes to die.

For God has mark'd each sorrowing day,
And number'd every secret tear;
And heaven's eternal bliss shall pay
For all His children suffer here.[d]

9—13. (9) **voice,** *etc.*, including all private and public seasons of rejoicing.[a] (10) **wherefore,** *etc.*, ch. v. 19, xiii. 22.[b] (11) **because,** of rebellion and idolatry persisted in through generation after generation. (12) **worse,** *etc.*, ch. vii. 26; 1 Ki. xiv. 9. (13) **imagination,** better, stubbornness; perversity. (13) **these,** in the captive land ye may do your own will. The sentence is ironical.[c] **not . . favour,** *i.e.* understand that you cannot have liberty to serve idols and My favour. That is conditioned by your obedience.

Salutariness of mourning.—

How wretched is the man who never mourn'd
I dive for precious pearl in sorrow's stream:
Not so the thoughtless man that only grieves,
Takes all the torment, and rejects the gain
(Inestimable gain), and gives heaven leave
To make him but more wretched, not more wise.[d]

14, 15. (14) **therefore,** or "yet surely." **days come,** ch. xxiii. 7, 8.[a] (15) **land of the north,** the usual appellation of Chaldæa, wh. was north to Judæa.

e Cheever.

a "God here anticipates the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecies, and tells him how to demean himself when they should have been accomplished."—*Wordsworth.*
b "Among the Greeks, who anciently, as now, wore their hair, the custom of tearing, cutting off, or shaving the hair, was at least as common as among the Jews. With them the hair, thus separated from the head, was sometimes laid upon the corpse as a tribute of affection and regret; sometimes it was cast upon the funeral pile, to be consumed with the remains of the deceased; and on other occasions it was laid upon the grave."—*Kitto.*
c Am. viii. 10; Mi. i. 16.
v. 5. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 610.
d Bryant.

a Je. vii. 34, xxv. 10; Eze. xxvi. 13.

b De. xxix. 24; 1 Ki. ix. 8, 9.

c "There among idolaters you may indulge your evil propensities to the full; you may practise your idolatries without intermission."—*Rosenmüller.*
v. 11. *J. Weemse,* i. 93.
d Young.

a "The sufferings of Judah in the Babylonish captivity will be

Ground of confidence.—There is a story of a young man who was at sea in a raging tempest, and, when all the passengers were at their wits'-end for fear, he only was merry; and when he was asked the reason of his mirth, he answered that the pilot of the ship was his father, and he knew his father would have a care of him. The great and wise God, He is our pilot; He sits at the stern; and though the ship of the Church or State be in a sinking condition, yet be of good comfort, our Pilot will have a care of us.[b]—*Three epochs of confidence.*—People have generally three epochs in their confidence in man. In the first they believe him to be everything that is good, and they are lavish with their friendship and confidence. In the next, they have had experience, which has smitten down their confidence, and they then have to be careful not to mistrust every one, and to put the worst construction upon everything. Later in life, they learn that the greater number of men have much more good in them than bad, and that, even when there is cause to blame, there is more reason to pity than condemn; and then a spirit of confidence again awakens within them.[c]—*Christian confidence.*—A soldier lay dying in the hospital, in terrible agony. A visitor asked him, "What Church are you of?" "Of the Church of Christ," he replied. "I mean of what persuasion are you?" "Persuasion," said the dying man, as his eyes looked heavenward, beaming with love to the Saviour, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ."—What do you do without a mother to tell your troubles to?" said a child who had a mother to one whose mother was dead. "Mother told me whom to go to before she died," answered the little orphan. "I go to the Lord Jesus. He was mother's friend, and He is mine." The other replied, "Jesus Christ is up in the sky; He is far away, and has a great many things to attend in heaven. It is not likely He can stop to mind you." "I do not know about that," said the orphan; all I know is, He says He will; and that is enough for me." The orphan was right. God's ear is open to babes and sucklings as to young men and fathers.

16—18. (16) fishers . . hunters,[a] reference in these figures is to the coming judgments, by the Chaldæans, who would hunt out the people from their hiding-places, and accomplish a general destruction.[b] (17) eyes . . ways, Job xxxiv. 21; Pr. v. 21. The judgment is one decided on after complete inquiry and perfect knowledge. (18) first, *i.e.* before accomplishing the return promised in *v.* 15. double, *i.e.* in proportion to God's usual severity in punishing men's sins. *Double* is used as a fig. meaning *fully, amply.* carcases, so in contempt the offering of animals in their idol sacrifices is called.[c]

Divine comfort.—When a man walketh in the sun, if his face be towards it, he hath nothing before him but bright shining light and comfortable heat; but let him once turn his back to the sun, what hath he before him but a shadow? And what is a shadow, but the privation of light, and heat of the sun? Yea, it is but to behold his own shadow, defrauding himself of the other. Thus there is no true wisdom, no true happiness, no real comfort but in beholding the countenance of God; look

so great, that the deliverance from them will be more joyous than even their exodus from Egypt."—*Wordsworth.*

vv. 14, 15. *Abp. Synge*, i.

b Spencer.

"Though the mariner sees not the polestar, yet the needle of the compass which points to it tells him which way he sails; thus the heart that is touched with the loadstone of Divine love, trembling with godly fear, and yet still looking towards God by fixed believing, interprets the fear by the love in the fear, and tells the soul that its course is heavenward, towards the haven of eternal rest."—*Leighton.*

c Miss Bremer.

a Am. iv. 2; Hab. i. 15.

b "Int. understood, the fishers are the main armies who, in the towns and fortresses, capture the people in crowds as in a net, while the hunters are the light-armed troops, who pursue the fugitives over the whole country, and drive them out of their hiding-places with as eager pleasure as hunters track out their game."—*Spk. Com.*

from that and we lose these blessings; and what shall we gain? a shadow, an empty image; instead of a substantial, to gain an empty image of ourselves, and lose the solid image of God. Yet this is the common folly of the world; men prefer this shadow before that substance, whereas there is not the least appearance of any true comfort but in God only.[d]

19—21. (19) **fortress**, or place of defence. **Gentiles**, in their readiness to give up their idolatry shall reproach the hesitating Jews by their forwardness.[a] (20) **make gods**, an inconceivable absurdity in the very statement.[b] (21) **this once**, *i.e.* in this overwhelming judgment.[c] **the Lord**, better *Jehovah*, the covenant name of God.

Worldly comforts.—The comforts of this world are but like the treasures of snow; do but take a handful of snow, and crush it in your hands, it will melt away presently; but if you let it lie on the ground, it will continue for some time: and so it is with the things of this world; if you take the comforts of this life in your hands, and lay them too near your hearts in affection and love to them, they will quickly melt and vanish away from you; but if you leave them in their proper place, and do not set an inordinate affection upon them, they will continue the longer with you; as if you should line a garment with linen, it would do very well, but if you line it with pitch or glue, that will stick fast to the body, and in all likelihood soil both garment and the man that wears it; so when the world is glued to our hearts, it spoils the comforts of all the mercies that we enjoy; and so it may be said that the otherwise lawful use of them is abused, when they are either used too affectionately in making gods of them, or being too eagerly bent in the gaining of them.[d]

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

1—4. (1) **pen of iron**, Job xix. 24. An iron chisel suitable for cutting inscriptions on stones: or engraving on metal.[a] **point . . diamond**, or finger nail.[b] Such a pen made indelible marks, and so did the sin of Judah. **altars**, plural. God's altar was one, Baal's altars were many. Possibly the names of the idols to whose service the altar was devoted were put upon the horns. (2) **children**, whose lives might be sacrificed in the Moloch rites. Or indicating that the children are trained up in the fathers' bad example. (3) **mountain . . field**,[c] fig. for Zion. *Field* means "open country," the whole country of Judæa. **high places**, 1 Sa. ix. 12. **for sin**, or because of thy sin. (4) **discontinue**, cease to possess: or cease to till, so that the land shall have rest. **for ever**, *i.e.* until its consuming work is done.

The handwriting of great authors.—An old compositor who worked upon *Punch* many years ago tells us that of all the able contributors to that witty periodical, the manuscripts of Douglas Jerrold and Gilbert A'Beckett were the most peculiar. Jerrold's was written in almost microscopic characters with a fine gold pen, and so close that one of the sides of the small foolscap octavo paper he used would nearly fill a solid brevier column of *Punch*. Mr. A'Beckett's was altogether the reverse, being written very wide apart and on post octavo paper. It had a very curious

c Some think the reference is to the offering of human beings, or of unclean animals.
d *Spencer.*

a "The result of God's judgments on the Jews will be that both the Jews when restored, and the Gentiles who have witnessed those judgments, shall renounce idolatry for the worship of Jehovah."—*Fausset.*
b Je. ii. 11.
c "The 'hand' and 'might' wh. they were to know and feel, were the severe afflictions to be suffered during the captivity, and which they required to experience only once more in order to be effectually weaned from idolatry."—*Henderson.*
v. 19. *Dr. R. Morison*, 183.
d *T. Brooks.*

a The metal stylus for writing on clay tablets, the point of wh. was made of some hard substance, such as a diamond.

b "On Assyrian contract-tablets witnesses who were too poor to possess a seal impressed a nail-mark. From these nail-marks the word translated point has been derived."—*Bib. Things, etc.*

c Is. xi. 9, lvi. 7, lvii. 13.

See *C. J. Hoare*, "All Israel Saved," *Lect.* 117.

appearance, for he began up in the left-hand corner and widened out his lines till he finished the page, in a diamond shape, down in the opposite corner. When written thus, one of his pages would make about six lines of type. Mr. Dickens wrote a very unreadable hand, and his manuscript was full of alterations, deletions, and interlineations.[a]—*Originality of writing.*—If you would write to any purpose, you must be perfectly free from within. Give yourself the natural rein; think on no pattern, no patron, no paper, no press, no public; think on nothing, but follow your impulses. Give yourself as you are, what you are, and how you see it. Every man sees with his own eyes, or does not see at all. This is incontrovertibly true. Bring out what you have. If you have nothing, be an honest beggar, rather than a respectable thief.[c]—*Benefits of writing.*—The habit of committing our thoughts to writing is a powerful means of expanding the mind, and producing a logical and systematic arrangement of our views and opinions. It is this which gives the writer a vast superiority, as to the accuracy and extent of his conceptions, over the mere talker. No one can ever hope to know the principles of any art or science thoroughly who does not write as well as read upon the subject.[f]—*Adaptation of writing.*—As we should adapt the style of our writing to the capacity of the person it is addressed to, so should we our manner of acting; for as persons of inferior understandings will misconceive, and perhaps suspect some sophistry from an elegance of expression which they cannot comprehend; so persons of inferior sentiment will probably mistake the intention, or even suspect a fraud, from a delicacy of acting which they want capacity to feel.[g]—A man with a clear head, a good heart, and an honest understanding will always write well; it is owing either to a muddy head, an evil heart, or a sophisticated intellect, that men write badly, and sin either against reason, or goodness, or sincerity. There may be secrets in painting, but there are none in style. When I have been asked the foolish question what a young man should do who wishes to acquire a good style, my answer has been, that he should never think about it, but say what he has to say perspicuously as he can, and as briefly as he can, and then the style will take care of itself.[h]

5—8. (5) **trusteth in man**, as Judah was then trusting in Egypt and Assyria. **flesh**, contrasted with God. **arm**, of reliance. (6) **heath**, Heb. *'ar'ar*, wh. is both a "juniper" and a "destitute man." Here a dry bush, or bare tree.[a] **salt land**, in Heb. saltness is a sign of barrenness.[b] (7) **blessed**, *etc.*, Ps. ii. 12, xxxiv. 8, cxxv. 1. (8) **tree**, *etc.*, Ps. i. 3. **river**, or watercourse.[c] **see . . cometh**, *i.e.* shall not notice it bec. the heat brings sense of *fear*. **careful**, or anxious.[d] **drought**, marg. *restraint*.

The curse and the blessing (*vv.* 5—8).—I. The curse. 1. The person against whom it is denounced, the self-reliant, self-confident, etc.; 2. The language in which it is expressed implies that the person shall be unprosperous, useless, worthless, etc. II. The blessing. 1. The person to whom it is promised: he recognises God; 2. The language in which it is expressed. Apply:—On whom dost thou trust?[e]—*Difference between trusting man and God* (*vv.* 5—8).—Man not independent; must have a support; often selects a wrong one. 1. The folly and evil of

d Dublin University Magazine.

"That was a beautiful tribute of Napoleon to the supremacy of mind over physical force in the long trial. 'Do you know, Fontanes,' he said, 'what I admire most in the world? It is the powerlessness of force to found anything. There are only two powers in the world—the sabre and the pen; and in the end the former is always conquered by the latter.'"—*Anon.*

e Emerson.

f Blakey.

g Greville.

"Those writers who lie on the watch for novelty can have little hope of greatness; for great things cannot have escaped former observation."—*Johnson.*

h Southey.

a Ewald, Umbreit, etc.

b De. xxix. 23; Ps. cvii. 34; Zep. ii. 9.

c "Here apparently an artificial streamlet made for purposes of irrigation."—*Spk. Com.*

d "The pious man who makes God his confidence is truly happy, whatever may be the outward circumstances in which he may be

placed."—*Henderson.*

e G. Brooks.

f Delta in 400 Sks.

trusting in man. 1. Such trust is idolatrous in principle; 2. Grovelling in its aim; 3. Unreasonable in its foundation; 4. Destructive in its issue. II. The wisdom and benefit of trusting in the Lord. 1. It is pious in principle; 2. Elevated in its aim; 3. Rational in its foundation; 4. Glorious in its issue. Apply:—(1) A mistake to suppose the rich and gay happy, and the poor and pious miserable; (2) An unreserved confidence in God can alone secure our happiness and the Divine favour.*f*

a "There is no sure reliance to be placed in the feelings of the heart, nor in the dictates of conscience, unless the conscience be informed and regulated by the will and Word of God."—*Wordsworth.*

b Horsley.

c 1 Sa. xvi. 7; Ps. vii. 9, cxxxix. 1, 23.

d "According to the Arabian naturalist *Damir*, there was an old belief that the partridge took eggs out of other birds' nests, and that when the young were hatched, and were old enough, they ran away from their false parent."—*Bib. Things.*

e Albert Barnes.

f G. Brooks.

g Thomas Ellwood (Milton's friend).

9—11. (9) deceitful, *i.e.* self-deluding. We may never trust it.*a* wicked, or mortally sick, incurable.*b* (10) search, *etc.*, thoroughly, fr. God none of its secrets are hidden.*c* give, in righteous judgments. (11) partridge, *etc.*, better. "gathereth young wh. she hath not brought forth:" or "as the partridge sitteth on eggs wh. she hath not laid."*d* The idea is that "the covetous man is as sure finally to reap only disappointment as the partridge wh. piles up eggs not of her own laying, and is unable to hatch them."

The deceitfulness of the heart (*v.* 9).—1. Men impose on themselves in respect of their own character; 2. In regard to their attachments; 3. In regard to their power of resisting temptation; 4. In regard to their promises of reformation and amendment. Apply:—(1) Their danger of losing the soul; (2) You have a heart which is not to be trusted; (3) Wake from all delusions to the reality of your condition.*e*—*The human heart* (*v.* 9).—I. Its deceitfulness. 1. It misrepresents the nature of things; 2. It conceals the tendency of things; 3. It practises imposition on itself. II. Its wickedness. It is so—1. Universally; 2. Unsearchably; 3. Incurably. Learn—(1) Our need of regeneration; (2) The claims of the Saviour; (3) The duty of self-examination.*f*

A New Year's petition.—

O that my eyes might closed be
To what becomes me not to see!
That deafness might possess my ear
To what concerns me not to hear!
That truth my tongue might always tie
From ever speaking foolishly!
That no vain thought might ever rest
Or be conceived in my breast!
That by each word, each deed, each thought,
Glory may to my God be brought!
But what are wishes? Lord, my eye
On Thee is fixed, to Thee I cry:
O purge out all my dross, my sin,
Make me more white than snow within.
Wash, Lord, and purify my heart,
And make it clean in every part;
And when 'tis clean, Lord, keep it so,
For that is more than I can do.*g*

a The "throne of glory" is equivalent to Him who is enthroned in glory.

b "What is written in the

12—14. (12) throne,*a* the first reference is to the Temple as Jehovah's earthly dwelling-place, then the Prophet's thought rises to Jehovah Himself. (13) hope of Israel, on whose word alone Israel can safely hope. forsake thee, Ps. lxxiii. 27; Is. i. 28. written . . earth, or dust, where names are soon rubbed out. Contrasted with in the *rock*, where names may abide.*b*

fountain . . waters, ch. ii. 13. (14) thou . . praise, *i.e.* Thou only. The expression of simple and entire trust in God.

A prayer for salvation (*v.* 14).—1. These words express a deep concern about salvation, and an earnest desire to obtain it; 2. A firm persuasion that God alone can save; 3. A heartfelt application to God for salvation through the medium of prayer; 4. An unwavering confidence that the salvation which God bestows in answer to prayer will be a salvation suited to the wants of fallen man.[c]

Happiness in God.—The happiness of this mysterious nature of ours is never to be found merely in the possession of God's gifts, the work of His hand, or the bounties of His providence. The soul can find its true satisfaction only in rising beyond the gifts, and claiming the Giver as its own. When you covet the friendship or love of a fellow-man, it does not satisfy you that he bestows upon you only outward gifts—his money, his property, his books: what cares a loving, longing heart for these? Unless the man give you something more than these, give you himself, and become yours by the bond of deepest sympathy and affection, the rest are but worthless boons. So is it in the soul's relation with God. That after which, as by a mysterious and inborn affinity, every devout spirit yearns, it is not God's gifts and bounties, but Himself. The wealth of worlds would be to the heart longing after Deity a miserable substitute for one look of love from the Great Father's eye. "My soul thirsteth for God" is the language in which Scripture gives expression to this deep want of our nature, and points to the ineffable satisfaction provided for it. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!" "If any man love Me, My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him;" "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one."[d]

15—18. (15) where, *etc.*, Is. v. 19. The questions of the sceptic and the scoffer. (16) not hastened, *i.e.* had not intruded himself into the prophetic office, but simply followed the Divine call. His prophetic office was his *burden*. wh. in obedience he had taken up.[a] desired . . day, no wish to be a prophet of evil, bec. I had any vindictive feelings. (17) terror, or cause of dismay; *i.e.* by not fulfilling the threatenings Thou dost bid me deliver. (18) confounded, *etc.*, Ps. xxxv. 4, xl. 14. double, complete, and unusual, ch. xvi. 18.

Happiness everywhere.—

True Happiness had no localities,
No tones provincial, no peculiar garb.
Where Duty went, she went; with Justice went,
And went with Meekness, Charity, and Love.
Where'er a tear was dried, a wounded heart
Bound up, a bruised spirit with the dew
Of sympathy anointed, or a pang
Of honest suffering soothed, or injury
Repeated oft, as oft by love forgiven;
Where'er an evil passion was subdued,
Or Virtue's feeble embers fanned; where'er
A sin was heartily abjured and left;
Where'er a pious act was done, or breathed

earth may be easily effaced, as contrasted with what is written in a book, or engraven in the rock." — *Henderson.*

c G. Brooks.

The glory of God and the happiness of man are blended together by the Hand that united soul and body in one man, light and heat in one sun, holiness and happiness in one heaven; and what God has joined together let not man put asunder.

d Dr. Caird.

"'What you demand is here, or at Ulubræ.' You traverse the world in search of happiness, which is within the reach of every man: a contented mind confers it on all."—*Horace.*

a "I have not forced myself forward to follow thee as a shepherd."—*Umbreit. v.* 17. *B. Beddome*, iii. 53.

"It is not so much by the symmetry of what we attain in this life that we are to be made happy, as by the enlivening hope of what we shall reach in the world to come. While a man is stringing a harp, he tries the strings, not for music, but for construction. When it is finished it shall be played for melodies. God is fashioning the human heart for future joy. He

only sounds a string here and there to see how far His work has progressed."—*H. W. Beecher.*
b Pollock.

a "As the Sabbath was instituted as a sign or token of God's covenant with His people, the Jews profaning the Sabbath was in effect renouncing their share in the covenant."—*Lowth.*

"Bright Sabbath morning, on the moor, where all is still, save praise; and where, hard by, the ripe grain shakes its bright beard in the sun; the wild bee hums more solemnly; the deep sky, the fresh green grass, the sun, and sunny brook."—*Bailey.*

b Wayland.

a "In the siege the gates of Jerusalem and its palaces were actually burned with fire. Ne. ii. 13, 17."—*Wordsworth.*

"The green oasis, the little grassy meadow in the wilderness, where, after the week-days' journey, the pilgrim halts for refreshment and repose; where he rests beneath the shade of the lofty palm trees, and dips his vessel in the waters of the calm, clear stream, and recovers his strength

A pious prayer, or wished a pious wish;
There was a high and holy place, a spot
Of sacred light, a most religious fane,
Where Happiness, descending, sat and smiled.*b*

19—23. (19) gate, wh. one is not certain. Evidently the one through which there was the most traffic. (20) kings, prob. including all the officials. (21) take heed, on this point be very watchful. burden . . day, *comp.* Neh. xiii. 19. (22) hallow, *etc.*, Ex. xx. 8, etc. (23) neck stiff, the sign of rebellious opposition and wilfulness.*a*

Religious observance of the Sabbath.—The importance of the religious observance of the Sabbath is seldom sufficiently estimated. The violation of this duty by the young is one of the most decided marks of incipient moral degeneracy. Religious restraint is fast losing its hold upon that young man who, having been educated in the fear of God, begins to spend the Sabbath in idleness or in amusement. And so also of communities. The desecration of the Sabbath is one of those evident indications of that criminal recklessness, that insane love of pleasure, and that subjection to the government of appetite and passion, which forebodes that the "beginning of the end" of social happiness, and of true national prosperity, has arrived. Hence we see how imperative is the duty of parents, and of legislators, on this subject. The head of every family is obliged, by the command of God, not only to honour this day himself, but to use all the means in his power to secure the observance of it by all those committed to his charge. He is thus not only promoting his own, but his children's happiness; for nothing is a more sure antagonist force to all the allurements of vice, as nothing tends more strongly to fix in the minds of the young a conviction of the existence and attributes of God, than the solemn keeping of this day. And hence, also, legislators are false to their trust, who, either by the enactment of laws, or by their example, diminish, in the least degree, in the minds of a people, the reverence due to that day which God has set apart for Himself.*b*

24—27. (24) diligently, with anxious carefulness and thought seeking fully to obey. (25) remain for ever, or permanently continue the centre of the covenant kingdom. (26) shall come, as at the great festivals. sacrifices of praise, *i.e.* sacrifices wh. should be sincere expressions of pious and grateful feeling. (27) fire, *etc.*, La. iv. 11.*a* "The scene of their sin should be the scene of their punishment."

Types and uses of the Sabbath.—

Hail to the day which He, who made the heaven,
Earth, and their armies, sanctified and blest,
Perpetual memory of the Maker's rest!
Hail to the day when He, by whom was given
New life to man, the tomb asunder riven,
Arose! That day His Church doth still confess,
At once Creation's and Redemption's feast,
Sign of a world called forth, a world forgiven.
Welcome that day, the day of holy peace,
The Lord's own day! to man's Creator owed,

And man's Redeemer; for the soul's increase
In sanctity, and sweet repose bestowed;
Type of the rest when sin and care shall cease,
The rest remaining for the loved of God![b]

Sabbath evening.—

Closing Sabbath! Ah, how soon
Have thy sacred moments pass'd!
Scarcely shines the morn, the noon,
Ere the evening brings thy last;
And another Sabbath flies,—
Solemn witness!—to the skies.

What is the report it bears
To the secret place of God?
Does it speak of wordly cares,
Thoughts which cling to earth's low sod?
Or has sweet communion shone
Through its hours from God alone?

Could we hope the day was spent
Holily, with constant heart,
We might yield it up content,—
Knowing, though so soon it part,
We should see a better day,
Which could never pass away.

God of Sabbaths! Oh forgive,
That we use Thy gifts so ill;
Teach us daily how to live,
That we ever may fulfil
All Thy gracious love designed,
Giving Sabbaths to mankind.[c]

to go forth again upon his pilgrimage in the desert with renewed vigour and cheerfulness."—*Reade.*

b Bp. Mant. "He that would prepare for heaven, must honour the Sabbath on earth. He that would hope for the spiritual joys there, must acquire a taste and aptitude for them here..... They who complain of weariness and satiety in the services of Christ have an evidence in their own breasts of their unfitness for a heavenly world—they are condemned out of their own mouths. The louder they exclaim against our Lord's day and its duties, the more decidedly do they exclude themselves from the Christian character and the Christian hope."—*Bishop D. Wilson.*

c Edmiston.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

1—4. (1, 2) **house**, or workshop. The clay-field lay south of Jerusalem, just beyond the valley of Hinnom.[a] (3) **wheels**, *lit.* the two wheels.[b] (4) **marred**, or spoiled: it was a failure. **made it again**, *i.e.* made up the clay again into a new vessel, and possibly one of another shape, and fitted for another purpose.

The parable of the potter (*vv.* 1—10).—Consider man in the hands of God—I. As morally defective: the clay marred, in moral judgment, moral affections, moral conduct. II. As morally improvable: God is mighty to save, emotionally, magisterially, reformatively. III. As morally free. It is here indicated that man is—1. Responsible for his destiny; 2. For his conduct.[c]

Discovery of porcelain.—Although many persons have devoted their whole lives to the phantoms of discovering the perpetual motion and the philosopher's stone, which might have been much better employed, yet even these pursuits have sometimes proved of great service. Porcelain, which had been known to the Chinese and Japanese for ages, was not made in Europe until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when John Bottger, a German from Schlaiz, in Voigtland, was the first in Europe who invented the art. This man was apprentice to one Zorn, an

a Zec. xi. 13; Matt. xxvii. 10.

b "By this is meant the horizontal lathe of the potter, consisting of two wheels or round plates, on the upper one of wh. was placed the clay, which he moulded into vessels at his pleasure. These wheels were either of wood or stone, and were in use at an early period among the Egyptians."—*Henderson.*

c Dr. Thomas. *vv.* 1—6. *G. Whitefield*, v. 197; *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kgs.* 395.

"False happiness renders men stern and proud, and that happiness is never communicated. True happiness renders them kind and sensible, and that happiness is always shared."—*Montesquieu.*

apothecary at Berlin, where he met with an alchemist, who, in return for some good offices done to him by Bottger, promised to teach him the art of making gold. Bottger then imagining himself to be in possession of the secret of making gold, immediately concluded that his fortune was made, and ran away from Berlin into Saxony, in the year 1700. Thither he was pursued, but he found protection in that country, where they at length urged him to give a specimen of his pretended knowledge; which, in fact, the poor fellow was not able to do, as he had been imposed upon, and, in truth, knew nothing of the matter. In order, however, to discover the grand secret, he laboured incessantly; and it so happened that having once mixed various earths together, in order to make strong and durable crucibles, in course of baking them he accidentally discovered the art of making porcelain. Thus the intended transmutation took place, not in the metals indeed, but in his own person; and as if he had been touched with a conjurer's wand, he was on a sudden transformed from an alchemist into a potter. The first porcelain thus manufactured at Dresden, in 1706, was of a brownish-red colour, being made of a brown clay.[d]

d Percy Anec.

5—10. (5, 6) **cannot . . potter,** a strong assertion of God's absolute power and right over the creatures He makes and the nations He calls into being.[a] **ye in mine hand,** *i.e.* I can crush you down into a shapeless mass, out of which I may form a new nation. (7) **pluck up,** ch. i. 10. (8) **if . . evil,** all God's dealings with men are conditional. His conduct towards them is "always in strict accordance with the manner in which they behave themselves towards Him."[b] (9) **build,** or establish it. (10) **of the good,** change My purpose of blessing it with prosperity.

a Is. xlv. 8; Ro. ix. 20.

b "God is said to *repent* of evil, when He *changes* His dealings with men and nations, on their turning to Him."—*S. Augustine.*

The dignity of man.—When a piece of base metal is coined with the king's stamp, and made current by his edict, no man may henceforth presume either to refuse it, either in payment, or to abate the value of it; so God, having stamped His own image upon every man, and withal signified His blessed pleasure, how precious He would have him to be in our eyes and esteem, by express edict proclaiming: "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man: I require every man to be his brother's keeper; for in the image of God made He man:" we must look to answer it as a high contempt of that sacred Majesty, if we set any man at nought, or make less account of him than God would have us. The contumelious use of the image is in common construction ever understood as a dishonour meant to the prototpye. The Romans, when they meant to set a mark of public disgrace or dishonour on any eminent person, did manifest their intention by throwing down breaking, or trampling upon their statues or pictures.[c]

c Bp. Sanderson.

11—14. (11) **go to,** Ge. xi. 3. **frame,**[a] as a potter frames a work on his wheels. **devise,** *etc.*, terms implying careful preparation. **return,** *i.e.* turn from the evil, and return to your God, and goodness.[b] (12) **no hope,**[c] a despairing feeling may lead to keeping on in a course of sin; therefore God gives such gracious promises and assurances to keep up hope. (13) **ask . . heathen,** see if you can find a parallel case.[d] **virgin,** a term intended to remind the people that they had been wholly

"To be happy, the passion must be cheerful and gay, not gloomy and melancholy. A propensity to hope and joy is real riches; one to fear and sorrow, real poverty."—*Hume.*

a This word is still in use in the North of England, as meaning, "set about work;" "manner of doing work."

b 2 Ki. xvii. 13; Je. vii. 3.

separated unto God. (14) will, *etc.*, trans. "Shall one leave the moisture of the field (for) the snow-water of Lebanon, or shall the running waters be forsaken for the muddy waters?" Illustrating the leaving of the true God for false gods.

Fallen man.—We saw at Hanover the unfinished palace of the deposed monarch; we were shown his state and private carriages and his stables of cream-coloured horses. A saddening sight to see all the emblems of sovereignty and no king; the insignia of royalty and the monarch for ever exiled. How like to human nature, which has so much about it prepared for the service of the King of kings, so much of faculty for heavenly occupation; but the King has departed and the house is left desolate, and all the furnishing thereof perverted to alien uses. Thought, imagination, judgment, memory, all fit to be yoked to celestial chariots, become the very hacks of the devil, and the body once a palace now a haunt of thieves. Alas, alas! poor manhood![e]

15—17. (15) forgotten me, the pure and living water; ch. ii. 13, xvii. 13. vanity, a word meaning *falsehood*, and severely characterising the idol worship. they, *i.e.* the false gods; said to do what the false prophets and priests really did. ancient paths, the old beaten track, as set forth in the law of Moses. paths, *i.e.* self-willed bypaths. not cast up, raised, and prepared, so as to be fit and safe to travel on.[a] (16) hissing, an expression of insult and contempt. wag . . head, in mockery and ridicule. (17) east wind,[b] fig. for the calamities of war and wasting judgments. the back, a sign of displeasure: ch. ii. 27.[c]

Man—perversion of his faculties.—According to the fable, the tail of the snake obtained precedence of the head and led the way in the creature's journeying. Being altogether blind the new guide dashed against a stone at one moment, and the next came violently against a tree, and at last drowned both itself and the head in the river of death. Here may be seen the unhappy condition of men in whom their baser nature is dominant, the animal controlling the intellectual. They invert the order of nature, they rebel against common sense; their course cannot but be unwise and dangerous, and their end must be fatal. God made man upright, and placed his thoughtful faculties aloft in the place of sovereignty, but man in his folly permits the appetites which he holds in common with the brute creation to reign supreme, while the mind, which ought to rule, is degraded to meanest servitude.[d]

18—20. (18) devise devices, or frame a plot to secure his ruin. not perish, *etc.*, *i.e.* we need not fear if we put this troublesome Prophet away; we shall still have the Law, the priest, and the prophet among us.[a] with the tongue, by carrying malicious reports about him to the king, Jehoiakim. (19) give heed, appeal to God from heedless man. voice, or loud outcry and threats. (20) digged . . soul, Ps. xxxv. 7. speak good, to plead in their behalf.

Slander—poisonous.—This slander is compared to poison—"the tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." The deadliest poisons are those for which no test is known: there are poisons so destructive that a single drop insinuated into the veins produces death in three seconds, and yet no chemical science can separate that virus from the contaminated blood, and show the

c Je. ii. 25.

"This language of the Jews involves the last stage of hardened wickedness."—*Henderson.*

d "Even among the heathen it was a thing unheard of, that a nation should lay aside its gods for foreign gods, though their gods are false gods."—*Fausset.*

e *Spurgeon.*

a "A road cast up means one raised sufficiently to keep it out of the reach of floods, etc. We still call our chief roads *highways*, bec. when the country was undrained it was necessary to raise them above the level of the adjoining fields."—*Spk. Com.*

Is. lvii. 14, lxii. 10.

b Job xxvii. 21, xxxviii. 24; Ps. xlviii. 7; Is. xxvii. 8.

c Is. i. 15, lix. 2.

d *Spurgeon.*

a "They comforted themselves with the assurance that God had made these lasting institutions in His Church, and the Law declares they shall never perish. I.e. vi. 18, x. 11; comp. Je. v. 11."—*Grotius.*

metallic particles of poison glittering palpably, and say, "Behold, it is there."[b]

'Tis slander
Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world, kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons; nay, the secrets of the grave
This viprous slander enters.[c]

21—23. (21) deliver, *etc.*, Ps. cix. 10.[a] "Let the calamities of war and famine, which Thou hast threatened, come upon them; I can intercede no more." (22) cry, such as rises in a city wh. is given over to be sacked. (23) thou knowest, in this the good man may ever find rest. forgive not, but execute Thy judgments on them.[b]

Mohammedan sirdar.—At the siege of Tellicherry, Sirdar Cawn, the Mohammedan general, after a spirited resistance, threw himself with many of his bravest and most faithful followers into a fortified house formed in the cavity of a rock at Corichee, the mansion of his women and the repository of his treasures. He determined not to survive the disgrace of a defeat, but to defend himself to the last extremity. This stronghold was at length set on fire, and the sirdar and his followers were compelled to surrender, or perish in the flames. At the first breaking out of the conflagration many of the sirdar's family, fearful of a worse fate, began to drop down from the walls, amidst the fire of the sepoys. Among these were seven of the finest women of the East, who composed the sirdar's seraglio. Captain Christie, who happened to pass by the spot at the moment they were preparing to throw themselves from the battlements, stopped the firing at the hazard of his life, ran up to their assistance, and received them one after another in his arms. Lieutenant Hawkes, of the artillery, came up to lend his assistance in this generous act of gallantry, and the fair captives were conducted by the two officers in safety to their commanding officer. The general, like another Scipio, ordered them to be given up to their lord, who had testified the most agonising anxiety concerning their fate. When they came into his presence he looked sternly into their faces, and manifested symptoms of trouble, anguish, and despair. But after he had conversed with them for some time, his face became suffused with tears of joy, and he expressed the strongest emotions of gratitude for the delicate manner in which the women had been treated by the British officers. "You," said he, "enjoy the fortune of this day, and you deserve it. Go therefore to the room (describing one in the fortified house), and you will find for your reward two lacs of rupees." Above £20,000 was accordingly divided among the army. The sirdar, when he was taken prisoner, had expected immediate death; he inquired why it was delayed, and regarded the humanity of the English in sparing him with astonishment. "If you mean," said he to the officers into whose hands he fell, "to save my life, restore my wives and my children." The joy that filled his mind on receiving this pledge of the merciful intentions of the English was not lasting. He died soon after of grief and agony of mind, desiring, as a last favour from Major Abington, that his family might be sent to Seringapatam. His request was readily granted and punctually performed.[c]

b F. W. Robertson.

c Shakespeare.

"Know then this truth, enough for man to know, virtue alone is happiness below."—*Pope.*

a "These words of malediction, regarded as utterances of personal feeling, are not exempt from the taint and stain of human infirmity and passion."—*Wordsworth.*

b "It redounds to the glory of God's justice that incorrigible sinners should meet with exemplary punishment."—*Lowth.*

"Human happiness, according to the most received notions, seems to consist of three ingredients — action, pleasure, and indolence. And though these ingredients ought to be mixed in different proportions, according to the particular disposition of the person, yet no one ingredient can be entirely wanting without destroying in some measure the relish of the whole composition." — *David Hume.*

"What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy, the soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy."—*Pope.*

c Percy Anec.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

1—5. (1) earthen bottle, Heb. *bakbuk*, a flask with a long neck, wh. took its name from the noise made by liquids in running out of it. ancients, elders and rulers. ancients . . priests, *i.e.* the heads of the twenty-four courses.[a] These were to be witnesses of the symbolic action. (2) Hinnom, ch. vii. 31. east gate, or sun-gate. (3) ears . . tingle, 1 Sa. iii. 11; 2 Ki. xxi. 12. (4) estranged, *etc.*, alienating it from God by introducing the idol worship. blood of innocents, children offered to Moloch, as *v.* 5. (5) built also, *comp.* ch. vii. 31, 32.[b]

Anecdote of a French preacher.—Massillon, in the first sermon he ever preached, found the whole audience, upon his getting into the pulpit, in a disposition no way favourable to his intentions; their nods, whispers, or drowsy behaviour, showed him that there was no great profit to be expected from his sowing in a soil so barren; however, he soon changed the disposition of the audience by his manner of beginning: "If," says he, "a cause, the most important that could be conceived, were to be tried at the bar before qualified judges; if this cause interested ourselves in particular; if the eyes of the whole kingdom were fixed upon the event: if the most eminent counsel were employed on both sides; and if we had heard from our infancy of this undetermined trial; would you not all sit with due attention and warm expectation to the pleadings on both sides? Would not all your hopes and fears be hinged upon the final decision? And yet, let me tell you, you have this moment a cause of much greater importance before you, a cause where not one nation, but all the world, are spectators; tried, not before a fallible tribunal, but the awful throne of heaven; where not your temporal and transitory interests are the subjects of debate, but your eternal happiness or misery, where the cause is still undetermined; but, perhaps, the very moment I am speaking may fix the irrevocable decree that shall last for ever; and yet, notwithstanding all this, you can hardly sit with patience to hear the tidings of salvation. I plead the cause of heaven, and yet I am scarcely attended to."[c]

6—9. (6) Tophet, ch. vii. 32. (7) void, empty, worthless, ineffective.[a] carcases, *etc.*, ch. vii. 33, xvi. 4. (8) hiss, in contempt. (9) eat, *etc.*, Le. xxvi. 29; De. xxviii. 53; La. iv. 10.

Fervency in preaching.—

Still thinking I had little time to live,
My fervent heart to win men's souls didst rive;
I preached as never sure to preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men! . . .
Though God be free, He works by instruments,
And wisely fitteth them to His intents.
A proud unhumbled preacher is unmeet
To lay proud sinners humbled at Christ's feet;
So are the blind to tell men what God saith,
And faithless men to propagate the faith:
The dead are unfit means to raise the dead,
And enemies to give the children's bread;

a 1 Chr. xxiv. 4.

b Baal and Moloch were names promiscuously given to the same idol. Prob. Baal was the general name, and Moloch distinctive of one form of his manifestation.

"The pious George Herbert built a new church at Layton Ecclesia, near Spalding, and by his order the reading pew and pulpit were a little distant from each other, and both of an equal height; for he would often say, 'They should neither have a precedency or priority of the other; but that prayer and preaching, being equally useful, might agree like brethren, and have an equal honour and estimation.'"—*Life of Herbert.*

c R. T. S.

a "*Neumann* supposes that Jer. carried the bottle to Tophet full of water, the symbol in the East of life, and at these words emptied it before the assembled elders."—*Spk. Com.*

True eloquence consists in saying all that is necessary and nothing more.

And utter strangers to the life to come,
Are not the best conductors to our home.
They that yet never learned to live and die,
Will scarcely teach it others feelingly.[b]

10—13. (10) break, *etc.*, as a sign of the entire and hopeless destruction of the city. (11) made whole, or healed. Comp. the crushing of the clay of the marred vessel, and making a new one from it. A finished vessel, once broken, cannot be thus repaired or remade.[a] (12) as Tophet, ch. vii. 31. (13) defiled, by the presence of dead bodies. because of, better, *even* the very houses. roofs, flat, and often used as places for sacrifices.[b]

Preaching—of the preacher.—When he preacheth, he procures attention by all possible art, both by earnestness of speech—it being natural for men to think that where there is much earnestness there is somewhat worth hearing—and by a diligent and a busy cast of his eyes on his auditors, with letting them know that he marks who observes and who not; and with particularising of his speech, now to the younger sort, then to the elder—now to the poor, and now to the rich,—"This is for you, and this for you;" for particulars ever touch and awake more than generals. Herein, also, he serves himself of the judgments of God; as of those ancient times, so especially of late ones, and those most who are nearest to his parish; for people are very attentive to such discourses, and think it behoves them to be so when God is so near them, and even over their heads. Sometimes he tells them stories and sayings of others, according as his text invites him. For them also men heed, and remember better than exhortations, which, though earnest, yet often die with the sermon, especially with country people, who are thick and heavy, and hard to raise to a point of zeal and fervency, and need a mountain of fire to kindle them; but stories and sayings they will well remember. He often tells them that sermons are dangerous things; that none goes out of church as he came in, but either better or worse; that none is careless before his judge; and that the word of God shall judge us. By this and other means the parson procures attention; but the character of his sermons is holiness. He is not witty, nor learned, nor eloquent, but holy—a character that Hermogenes never dreamed of, and therefore he could give no precepts thereof. But it is gained, first, by choosing texts of devotion, not controversy; moving and ravishing texts, whereof the Scriptures are full. Secondly, by dipping and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts before they come into our mouths: truly affecting and cordially expressing all that we say, so that the auditors may plainly perceive that every word is heart-deep. Thirdly, by turning often, and making many apostrophes to God: as, "O Lord! bless my people, and teach them this point!" or, "Oh, my Master, on whose errand I come, let me hold my peace, and do Thou speak Thyself; for Thou art love, and when Thou teachest, all are scholars." Some such irradiations scatteringly in the sermon carry great holiness in them. The Prophets were admirable in this. So Isa. lxiv. 1—"Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down," etc. And Jer. x. 23, after he had complained of the desolation of Israel, turns to God suddenly, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself," etc. Fourthly, by frequent wishes of the people's good, and joying

b R. Baxter.

a By these figures is set forth the distinction between chastisements and judgments.

b Zep. i. 5.

"Simplicity of style, then, as opposed to the artificial and rhetorical, is essential to earnestness; for who can believe that man to be intent on saving souls, who seems to have laboured in the study only to make his sermon as fine as glittering imagery and high-sounding diction could render it. I could as soon believe a physician were intent on saving his fellow-creatures from death, who, when the plague was sweeping them into the grave, spent his time in studying to write his prescriptions in beautiful characters and classical Latinity."—*J. A. James.*

"Zeal for the public good is the characteristic of a man of honour and a gentleman, and must take place of pleasures, profits, and all other private gratifications. Whoever wants this motive is an open enemy, or an inglorious neuter to mankind, in proportion to the misapplied advantages with wh. nature and fortune have blessed him."—*Steele.*

c G. Herbert.

therein, though he himself were with St. Paul, "even sacrificed upon the service of their faith." For there is no greater sign of holiness than the procuring and rejoicing in another's good.[c]

14, 15. (14) **in the court**, indicating his fearless obedience to his Divine call. His life was at this time in peril: ch. xviii. 18. He chose the position in which he would be able to address the greatest crowd. (15) **all her towns**, or suburban villages.

Ministers of the Gospel.—An English merchant, who had occasion to visit Scotland on business about the year 1650, happened to hear three of the most eminent of the Scottish ministers of that age—Robert Blair, Samuel Rutherford, and David Dickson. Being asked, on his return, what news he had brought from Scotland, the gentleman, who had never shown any sense of religion before, replied, "Great and good news! I went to St. Andrew's, when I heard a sweet majestic-looking man (Blair), and he showed me the majesty of God. After him, I heard a little fair man (Rutherford), and he showed me the loveliness of Christ. I then went to Irvine, where I heard a well-favoured proper old man, with a long beard (Dickson), and that man showed me all my heart." "The whole general assembly," says Wodrow, "could not have given a better character of the three men."[a]

"'Tis a very sad thing when preachers shall be like printers, who many times compose and print off many things which they neither understand, love, nor have any experience of; all they aim at is money for printing, which is their trade; or when they shall be like gentlemen-ushers, who bring ladies to their pews, but go not in themselves; bring others to heaven, and themselves stay without."—*Venning.*

a Whitecross.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

1, 2. (1) **Pashur**, prob. head of the 16th course of priests.[a] **chief governor**, better, deputy-governor.[b] Heb. *Pakid Nagid*, or high priest's deputy. (2) **smote**, an insulting blow. Jeremiah seems to have been of the same order and the same family as Jeremiah. **stocks**,[c] 2 Chr. xvi. 10; Ac. xvi. 24. **high gate**, or upper gate. Prob. the gate on the north of the Temple.

Huguenot persecutions.—The irreligious character of the Revolution which these and their fellow workmen and the Encyclopædists brought about, followed logically enough from the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and a century and a half of Satanic persecution directed against the Huguenots—persecutions in the time of Louis XV., not the work of fanatics, but proceeding from a vicious king and a sceptical Court. The injury permanently done to the nation by such insensate intolerance is incalculable. The most earnest and devotedly religious spirits of France were either driven into exile or extinguished. When the earnest spirit of Protestantism was driven out, the earnest spirit of Catholicism decayed likewise: a mocking hypocritical uniformity took its place; licence and corruption flourished unreproved; and when deism and atheism arose, they found no antagonists worthy of respect. It were a melancholy thing to resign ourselves to the conclusion that so shameful a history as that of Louis XV., and the horrors of the French Revolution, were inflicted on a great people without any intelligible causes. One of the chief of these was the inhuman and odious persecution which the devoted adherents of an austere and sublime creed met with from the day of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.[d]

a 1 Chr. xxiv. 14.

b "Poss. he was set over the several watches or guards of the priests and Levites: for they kept watch and ward in the Temple both night and day."—*Lowth.*

c "An instrument of torture with five holes, in wh. the neck, two hands, and two feet were thrust, the body being kept in a crooked posture."—*Fausset.*

d Edinburgh Review.

3–6. (3) **brought forth**, bec the night's thinking made him feel that he had gone too far. **Magor-missabib**, *terror is on*

a Je. vi. 25.

"Prob. by contrast the word Pashur meant, 'Prosperity on every side.'"—*Henderson.*

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight; he can't be wrong whose life is in the right. In faith and hope the world will disagree, but all mankind's concern is charity."—*Pope.*

b R. T. S.

every side.[a] (4) terror, *etc.*, though not narrated we may suppose that Pashur suffered very greatly in the coming calamities. (5) deliver, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xx. 17. strength, or treasures; wealth and luxuries. labours, for produce of the labours. (6) thy friends, or partisans. lies, false assurances of peace and deliverance.

A persecutor.—Dr. Cox, at the anniversary of the Baptist Home Missionary Society, in 1827, stated that a few years ago, in a village, a female of guilty notoriety, having read a religious tract, was induced to turn from her evil ways, and, through the instruction of one of their missionaries, to acknowledge her guilt, and to reform. For that act of repentance she brought down the malignant enmity of her friends, even of her own family, who did not desist from their persecution until they had brought her to a state of dangerous, and, as it ultimately proved, fatal illness. On her death-bed, she entreated one of her persecuting brothers, who came to see her die, once to attend the preacher whom she heard in the village; and, as a dying request is seldom refused, even by the most callous, he went to the house of God with the bitterest feelings, both against the preacher and his subject. But mark the result: He, whose "ways are not as our ways," touched his heart, turned him from his wickedness, changed the whole current of his feelings, and made him a decided convert to Christianity. He was then, Dr. Cox believed, a faithful itinerant labourer in the field of his former enmity.[b]

7—9. (7) deceived, better, *persuaded;* induced to become a prophet.[a] in derision, *i.e.* made a laughing-stock. (8) cried out, or complained. Complaint was the characteristic feature of all his work. All through he had nothing but lamentation, and this was wearying to himself and to all who heard him. reproach, bec. the people said of Jeremiah, "He does nothing but groan." (9) speak . . name, this was the resolve of a time of despondency. burning fire, Ps. xxxix. 3. He found that he could not resist the impulses of God's Spirit.

Ministers, their discouragements and supports (*vv.* 9—12).—I. Ministerial discouragements distressingly felt. 1. Here is a rash resolution formed; 2. An insuperable obstable presented to his meditated abandonment of his work. II. Popular detraction sensitively deplored. 1. Explain the nature of popular detraction; 2. Adduce Scripture precepts respecting the evil of popular detraction; 3. Exhibit Scripture examples of individuals who have felt the scorpion's sting of popular detraction; 4. Analyse more particularly the case of the Prophet as exhibited in the text. III. Divine support happily realised. 1. From a sense of the presence and power of God: 2. Expectation of the future failure and confusion of his opposers; 3. From a belief of the omniscience of God; 4. From the efficacy of prayer. Learn—(1) To expect detraction; (2) Follow the Saviour's rule: speak to the detractor alone; (3) Cultivate habits of circumspection: (4) Lay our cause before God; (5) Anticipate through the merits of Christ a world where there will be no defaming.[b]—*Improvements in preaching.* —In many of our river valleys freshets frequently cover the old soil many inches deep, and all its grasses and flowers are hid by the mud and buried there. But after a time seeds and roots begin to germinate, and soon a richer vegetation than ever works in on that very same soil, so that the river bottom is never aban

a "The Prophet alludes to his reluctance to accept the prophetical office, wh. it required powerful inducements from Jehovah to overcome."—*Henderson.*
"I could have no temptation to run upon this errand without being sent, since it procures me nothing but ill-usage."—*Loseth.*
vv. 7—12. *Origen, Op.* iii. 262.
"When a young painter inquired of the celebrated Gilbert Stuart, how young persons should be taught to paint, he replied, 'Just as puppies are taught to swim, —chuck them in!' No one can learn to swim in the sea of extempore speech without going into the waters."—*Bishop McIlvaine.*
b J. Redford.

doned, and never becomes a desert. The old growths may cease by the superimposition of a new soil, but the new soil itself must be covered with a new growth. As it is in nature, so it is in the human soul. I expect increasing knowledge, and by increasing knowledge I expect that there will be better methods. With increasing mind, there ought to be more skill in preaching. There ought to be better discernment of the nature of the human mind, and therefore better methods of society. There ought to be great improvements in education. But all these changes may take place without in the slightest degree affecting the more fundamental elements of revealed religion in nature, the necessity of the human soul for the doctrine of immortality, and that blessed doctrine of redemption through Jesus Christ, which is the highway to immortality.[c]

10—13. (10) defaming, or the people talking together. Ps. xxxi. 13. my familiars, Heb. *men of my peace.* Ps. xli. 9. Men of my acquaintance. enticed, *i.e.* misled, so that some good ground of accusation against him might be found.[a] (11) with me, in this was assured safety, whosoever his enemies might be.[b] everlasting confusion, the term *everlasting* is here equal to *utter and hopeless.* (12) triest, *etc.*, ch. xi. 20, xvii. 10. opened, unfolded, and so committed. (13) sing, in anticipation; bec. the Prophet was quite sure that God would work deliverance for him.

Mischief of slander.—

And over the laurels of full-blown Fame,
And the tender shoots of the young Good Name,
He stamped with his merciless hoof of flame,
And he left its print on each.
And backwards and forwards he wriggled his tail,
Through rose-trimmed garden, and lily-strewn vale,
Marking his course by a loathsome trail,
Like a snail-track over a peach.

14—18. (14) cursed, *etc.*, comp. Job iii. 3, x. 18.[a] *Wordsworth* calls this "a passionate outbreak of human infirmity." (15) very glad, bec. of the possible future usefulness that seems to be in every new-born child. (16) cities, *etc.*, Ge. xix. 25. cry, of alarm. shouting, of the warriors.[b] (17) slew, *etc.*, a fig. for his wish that he had never known the miseries of life. (18) wherefore, *etc.*, Job x. 18, 19.

Life—its illusions.—

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat,
Yet, fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit;
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies more, and while it says we shall be bless'd
With some new joys, cuts off what we possess'd.
Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.
I'm tired with waiting for this chymic gold,
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.[c]

"It has been said that not less than fifty millions of Protestants, at different times, have been put to death by papists. What an army! What seas of blood have been shed! If their bodies were piled in one heap, they would be bigger than any mountain in this world." — *Dr. Beaumont.*
c Brecher.

a "So the Jews often tried to persuade our Lord to say something that might form ground of accusation against Him: *e.g.* Mk. xii. 13—17." —*Spk. Com.*
b Ro. viii. 31. "That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect; for slander's mark was ever yet the fair; so thou be good, slander doth not approve thy worth the greater." —*Shakespeare.*
a "Job's words are more violent and passionate, and more directly directed against God than Jeremiah's."—*Keil.* "This lamentation is written in poetical figures, and it is not to be looked upon as expressing indignation and malice, but rather mourning and sorrow."—*Lowth.*
b "Let him be kept in alarm the whole day, not merely at night when terrors ordinarily prevail, but in daytime when it is something extraordinary."—*Fausset.*
c Dryden.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

1, 2. (1) son of Melchiah, head of the fifth course. A different man from the Pashur of ch. xx. 1. Zephaniah, the second, or assistant priest. (2) Nebuchadrezzar, the more correct way of spelling this king's name.[a] according . . works, *i.e.* accomplishing our deliverance as in former days: comp. Is. xxxvii. 6. go up, withdraw his army from Jerusalem. Comp. the deliverance from Sennacherib.

Specific prayer.—From the want of this determinateness and precise discrimination in our objects of transaction with God, we retire from our devotions without any vivid impressions of what we have been seeking of Him; and we afterwards look abroad without distinct views of any relation between what takes place in the church, and what we carried on in the oratory. It is not thus we ask favours of each other. A beggar at our door begging indefinitely for "nothing particular," would not be likely to meet with relief. Civic and corporate petitions to the senate, or the throne, without a fixed prayer and determinate request, would have neither attention nor gracious answer. We have no reason to expect different and better results from our indefinite and unsettled transactions with God. Look to the record of the Spirit, and you will discover that all the answers registered in that book were specific replies to requests distinctly meant and proffered.[b]

3—7. (3) then, *etc.*, a response was made that would be quite opposed to their wishes and hopes. (4) in your hands, *i.e.* the turning back will be on your part, not on the part of the Chaldæans. into the midst, intimating that they would actually take the city. (5) I myself, by prospering the Chaldæans God would execute His own judgments on them. (6) pestilence,[a] in addition to the sword. This pestilence would be manifestly the Divine judgment. (7) not spare, ch. lii. 10, 27.

Armies of God.—In heaven He hath armies: of fire to burn Sodom; of floods to drown a world; of hailstones to kill the Amorites: of stars to fight against Sisera; the sun which stood still in Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, whilst Israel slew their enemies. Yea, there are heavenly soldiers. "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host." One of those celestial soldiers slew in one night above a hundred thousand Assyrians. Below He hath seas to drown Pharaoh; the earth to devour Korah; with fierce lions, fell dragons, hissing serpents, crawling worms, He can subdue His rebels. In hell He hath an army of fiends, though bound in chains, that they should not hurt the faithful, yet let loose to terrify the wicked. There was an evil spirit to vex Saul; foul spirits in the Gospel made some deaf, others dumb, and cast many into fires and into waters.[b]

8—10. (8) way . . death, De. xxx. 19. Here *life* means securing their life by passing over to the Chaldæans. (9) falleth to, goes and makes his submission to. life . . prey, to make his escape with his life. (10) against, *i.e.* fully purposing its complete destruction.

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a "This prophecy was given prob. when, after having repulsed the Egyptians who brought succours to the Jews, the Chaldees were a second time advancing against Jerusalem, but were not yet closely besieging it."—*Fausset.*

"Let prayer be the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening."—*Matthew Henry.*

b Dr. T. W. Jenkyn.

a "Apparently this broke out at an early part of the siege, and was the result of the excessive crowding of men and animals in a confined space, with all sanitary regulations utterly neglected."—*Spk. Com.*

"Little is said [in the Bible] of angels. They are like the constellations in space: there is light enough to reveal, to show that they are; but more is needed to reveal all their nature and functions."—*Henry Batchelor.*

b T. Adams.

"I have many books that I cannot sit down to read; they are indeed good and sound, but, like halfpence, there

A lighthouse Bible.—A lighthouse looks like a tall pillar rising out of the sea, or built upon some high bluff. The top is a large lantern, where a bright light is kept burning all night, which is seen far out to sea; and it says to all ships and sailors sailing by, "Take care! take care!" One is built on a ledge of rocks: its warning light says, "Give wide berth to these sunken rocks." Another says, "Steer clear of this dangerous reef." Another, "Keep clear of this dangerous headland. If you come here you are lost." There are a great many lighthouses on the coast: how does a sailor know which is which? He sees a light gleaming through the darkness and the storm; but where is it? He has a chart in the ship, and that tells. A chart is a map of the coast with all its rocks and sandbanks and lighthouses put down, and everything that a sailor ought to know in order to steer his ship safely across the ocean. If he faithfully consults it, and keeps a good look-out, he is likely to ride out the storm, and come safely into port.

11—14. (11) house, the royal house or family; not the palace or the building. (12) in the morning, the usual fig. for *earnestly, thoroughly.* (13) inhabitant, image of the population of Jerusalem. It is feminine in form. rock, *i.e.* Mt. Zion. (14) forest, the Jewish fig. for stateliness, and used here for the stately buildings of Jerusalem.[a]

Notions of God.—There are two notions of God that have more or less prevalence among men. One represents Him as a vast organ located in the very centre of heaven, and giving forth majestic sounds when touched, and silent when not. The other represents Him as a Being that is never silent, never still, never unheard; One that has such a nature that if there were not an angel in heaven, if there were not a man on earth, if there were nothing in all creation, from side to side, there is that in Himself that would make Him for ever overflow with taste, and feeling, and love. The one ascribes to Him a nature that is merely susceptible of being called out upon the application of the motive. The other ascribes to Him a nature that pours itself abroad in the earth by reason of its own fulness and richness. It is the latter of these two ideas that I hold, and suppose the Scriptures to teach.[b]

goes a great quantity to a small amount. There are silver books, and a very few golden books; but I have one book worth them all, called the Bible." — *J. Newton.*

"Scriptures hard to be understood, must be explained by those that are plain." —*Collins.*

a "The metaphor of a forest is employed to convey the idea of a dense mass of buildings with which the city was filled."—*Henderson.*

"The unholy soul, like the mystical Babylon, makes itself a cage of unclean birds, and a habitation of filthy spirits: and if it continues to be such, it must, when it dislodges, take up its habitation with cursed spirits for ever in utter darkness."—*Leighton.*

b *Beecher.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

1—5. (1) go down, the palace on Zion was actually higher than the Temple, but regarded as *inferior*, the language of descent becomes appropriate.[a] (2) king of Judah, the prophecy is general, and should be referred to whoever might be on the throne. The king then reigning was Jehoiakim. servants, or courtiers. these gates, the large space at the entry of the palace-courts, where the king would hold audience. (3) execute, *etc.*, ch. xvii. 12.[b] Comp. *v.* 17. (4) indeed, truly and heartily. enter, *etc.*, ch. xvii. 25. (5) not hear, ch. xvii. 27. swear, De. xxxii. 40—42. this house, the royal palace.

Sacredness of private rights.—The private rights of a public man should be guarded as sacredly as the altar of a temple. If the President of the United States pursue an inhuman course towards the Indian,—if he transgress the canons of liberty

a It was also necessary to descend from the Temple-mount in order to reach the palace on Mount Zion. Comp. 2 Chr. xxiii. 20.

b "There can be no doubt that the Prophet has in his eye the oppressive measures adopted by Jehoiakim for raising the tribute wh. Necho, king of Egypt,

had imposed upon him (2 Chr. xxxvi. 3); and defraying the cost of the expensive buildings which he caused to be erected in Jerusalem."—*Henderson.*

v. 3. *W. Reading*, iv. 100.

c Beecher.

a "Though thou wert never so precious in my sight, wert as valuable for riches and plenty as the fat pastures of Gilead, and thy buildings as beautiful for their stateliness as the tall cedars of Lebanon, yet unless thy princes and people reform, thou shalt become nothing but ruin and desolation."—*Lowth.*
b "The Gentile nations, more intelligent than you, shall understand that which you do not, viz., that this city is a spectacle of God's vengeance."—*Calvin.*

a 2 Chr. xxxv. 25.
b 2 Ki. xxiii. 34.
c Comp. the Shallum of 2 Ki. xv. 13, who only reigned one month.
d "The people perhaps entertained hopes of Shallum's return fr. Egypt, in wh. case they would replace him on the throne, and thereby free themselves from the oppressive taxes imposed by Jehoiakim."—*Fausset.*
e Woodworth.
f Walker.

a For Jehoiakim's history see 2 Ki. xxiii. 34—37, xxiv. 1—6.

which he is sworn to defend,—if he wink at evils which he is bound to prevent or suppress, he deserves severe public rebuke. But in his own private home, whether he manages his individual affairs with economy or stinginess: whether he drinks whisky at his table, or nothing but cold water; whether he dresses ill or well; talks much or little, spends his income in one way or another—these and all such-like things do not belong to him as President, but as a private man, and are sacred from remark. For good morals every man may be held responsible. There ought to be but one key to a man's privacy, and that in his own hands; but the devil has given everybody a key to it, and everybody goes in and out, and filches whatever he pleases.[c]

6—9. (6) art Gilead, Gilead was famous for its aromatic plants, its grassy uplands, and its abundance of sheep and cattle: so it is fitly taken as the emblem of prosperity. Lebanon, the usual metaphor for everything magnificent,[a] cities, the judgment should include all the cities of Judah along with Jerusalem. (7) prepare, *Heb.* sanctify: appoint to execute My judgments. choice cedars, fig. for the princes and state officers: or perhaps for the chief dwellings. (8, 9) many, *etc.*,[b] De. xxix. 24—26.

Heathen idolatry.—A singular phenomenon, known as the Spectre of the Brocken, is seen on a certain mountain in Germany. The traveller who at dawn stands on the topmost ridge, beholds a colossal shadowy spectre moving on the summits of the distant hills. But, in fact, it is only his own shadow projected upon the morning mists by the rising sun, and it imitates, of course, every movement of its creator. So heathen nations have mistaken their own image for Deity. Their gods display human frailties and passions and scanty virtues, projected and magnified upon the heavens, just as the small figures on the slide of a magic lantern are projected, magnified and illuminated, upon a white sheet.

10—12. (10) the dead, *i.e.* for Josiah, whose death was long remembered by an annual public lamentation.[a] goeth away, into captivity. This was the fate of Jehoahaz: from the captivity he never returned.[a] (11) Shallum, most prob. a name of Jehoahaz: poss. given to him in irony by the Prophet bec. he only reigned three months.[c] (12) die . . place, *i.e.* in Egypt.[d] "He was the first king of Judah who died in banishment."

Recollection of home.—

How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection recalls them to view;
The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wildwood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew.[e]

Thou spot of earth, where from my bosom
The first weak tones of nature rose,
Where first I cropp'd the stainless blossom
Of pleasure yet unmix'd with woe,
Where, with my new-born powers delighted,
I tripp'd beneath a mother's hand—
In thee the quenchless flame was lighted,
That sparkles for my native land.[f]

13—16. (13) woe unto him, *i.e.* Jehoiakim, who seems to have been a heartless tyrant.[a] chambers, lit. *upper* chambers,

wh. involved toilsome work in building.[b] service without wages, in olden times kings were accustomed thus to exact forced labour on public works from their people.[c] (14) wide house, *lit.* "house of extensions." windows, lit. *my windows*, the language of boastfulness. Some think it should be "large or double windows:" the blinds being *two-leaved*. ceiled, roofed. vermilion,[d] Eze. xxiii. 14. Red sulphuret of mercury. (15) reign, permanently and securely. eat and drink, the sign of enjoying life and peace. (16) know me? and My defendings and preservings.

Elegance does not make a home.—I never saw a garment too fine for a man or maid; there was never a chair too good for a cobbler, or cooper, or king to sit in; never a house too fine to shelter the human head. These elements about us, the gorgeous sky, the imperial sun, are not too good for the human race. Elegance fits man. But do we not value these tools of housekeeping a little more than they are worth, and sometimes mortgage a house for the mahogany we would bring into it? I had rather eat my dinner off the head of a barrel, or dress after the fashion of John the Baptist in the wilderness, or sit on a block all my life, than consume myself before I got to a home, and take so much pains with the outside that the inside was as hollow as an empty nut. Beauty is a great thing; but beauty of garments, house and furniture, is a very tawdry ornament compared with domestic love. All the elegance in the world will not make a home, and I would give more for a spoonful of real hearty love than for whole shiploads of furniture, and all the gorgeousness that all the upholsterers in the world could gather together.[e]

17—19. (17) covetousness, including all kinds of *getting* for his own pleasure or aggrandisement.[a] violence, or crushing; applied to the liberties and rights of the people. (18) not lament, the sign of regret for his departure. The death of such a tyrant would only be felt as a national relief. (19) burial . . ass, the manner of Jehoiakim's death is not recorded:[b] the point of the prophecy is that his body would not be buried.

The doom of the defrauder, etc. (*v.* 19).—This said of Jehoiakim. not his character; his life and death suggestive of the romance of crime. I. The romance of fraud: many think the poorest way to get money is to earn it. II. The romance of libertinism. III. The romance of assassination.[c]

The safety of right-doing.—Truth has no revolution in it. Right has no change in it. Justice is always safe and sure. If you must crucify Christ because He will not join your party, your faction, your Church, your religion, then crucify Him: but remember the eighteen hundred years of darkness, and revolution, and turmoil that followed His first crucifixion. The great battle of God Almighty is not fought out yet, and you will have more of it in your day. If you want peace, do right. If you will not do right, remember that God is the incendiary of the universe, and that He will burn your plans, and will by-and-by burn you with unquenchable fire.[d]

20—23. (20) Lebanon, *etc.*, the highest places in the surrounding country are mentioned as those from whence the people might see the failure of the allies in whom they were trusting.

b "From the absence of machinery the raising of materials for the upper stories was a difficult task, especially when massive stones were used."—*Spk.Com.*

c Comp. De. xxiv. 14, 15.

d "A beautiful red paint, called *sinopis*, bcc., according to Pliny, it was first discovered near the town of *Sinope*, in Pontus. It was composed of quicksilver and sulphur, and must not be mistaken for the preparation of red lead, known amongst us by the name of vermilion." — *Henderson.*

e *Theo. Parker.*

a For Jehoiakim's character comp. Eze. xix. 6.

b "Prob. he was taken prisoner in some valley during the siege, then killed, and his dead body cast into the highway." — *Lowth.*

c *Dr. Talmage.*

"The usurer hangs the cozener. Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear: robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold, and the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks: arm it in rags, a pigmy straw doth pierce it."—*Shakespeare.*

d *Beecher.*

a Fig. of east wind, comp. ch. iv. 12, xviii. 17.

Bashan, the northern part of the region beyond Jordan. passages, better *Abarim*, a range of mountains to the south of Gilead. lovers, here *allied nations*. (21) prosperity, in thy prosperous days. thy youth, *i.e.* the time of the Exodus. (22) wind,[a] fig. of coming calamity. pastors, or shepherds: here civil and ecclesiastical rulers. (23) inhabitants, *etc.*,[b] a fig. of Jerus., in view of the palaces roofed with cedar fr. Lebanon. gracious, or how wilt thou groan!

Man in material prosperity (*v.* 21).—Here we have man in material prosperity—I. Addressed by Almighty God. 1. Be humble; 2. Be spiritual; 3. Be generous. II. Refusing an audience with his Maker. 1. Because I am happy as I am; 2. Because Thy voice will disturb me. Address the prosperous:—(1) Be wise in time: (2) Use the world as not abusing it, etc.[c]

"*Tom of Ten Thousand.*"—Among the thousand victims of that most disastrous adventure, the South Sea scheme, there was perhaps scarcely one more to be pitied than a native of Leeds, of the name of Thomas Hudson. In the early part of his life he filled a respectable situation as a Government clerk in London. While in this situation, he came into the possession of a large fortune by the death of an aunt; he then retired into the country, where he lived for some time very happily, until he unfortunately became an adventurer in the South Sea scheme; and so sanguine was he of its success, that he embarked the whole of his fortune in it. When the news reached him of the failure of his darling scheme, he left his residence in a state of distraction, and went to London. From this moment he became insane, and "Tom of Ten Thousand," as he called himself, wandered through the streets, wrapped in a rug, and leaning on a crutch, and without either shoes or stockings. In this state did the poor creature perambulate, even in the coldest weather, and crave assistance from the humane, until death released him from all his troubles at a very advanced age.[d]

24—27. (24) Coniah, or *Jehoiachin*, son and successor of Jehoiakim. He surrendered to the Babylonians, and was carried captive to Chaldæa. signet, *i.e.* the royal ring used for sealing public documents. The signet expresses that wh. is exceedingly precious, and highly valued.[a] (25) give thee, as a captive. (26) mother, *i.e.* the queen-mother,[b] who had great influence at the Jewish court. (27) desire to return, intimating that the bitterness of captivity shall partly be the "home-sickness" which they shall suffer.

Dr. Franklin.—It is recorded of Franklin that, when a young man expressed his surprise that a gentleman well known to them, of unbounded wealth, should appear more anxious after business than the most assiduous clerk in a counting-house, the doctor took an apple from the fruit basket, and presented it to a little child, who could just totter about the room. The child could scarcely grasp it in his hand; he then gave it another, which occupied the other hand. Then choosing a third, remarkable for its size and beauty, he presented that also. The child, after many ineffectual attempts to hold the three, dropped the last on the carpet, and burst into tears. "See there," said Franklin, "there is a little man with more riches than he can enjoy." The increase of painful care, anxiety, and trouble, generally bear at least an equal proportion to the increase of

b "O Jerusalem, thou that art lifted up on high like Lebanon, and that makest thy nest in the stately cedars, that thinkest thyself secure, like an eagle which has built its nest in the loftiest trees of the highest mountain."—*Wordsworth.*

c Dr. Thomas.

"A holy woman was wont to say of the rich—'They are hemmed round with no common misery; they go down to hell without thinking of it, because their staircase thither is of gold and porphyry.'"—*Spurgeon.*

d Percy Anec.

a "The estimation in which signets were held is the point of the metaphor in the present instance."—*Henderson.*

b 2 Ki. xxiv. 15.

v. 24. *J. C. Dieterie, Ant.* 628; *Dr. E. Payson*, ii. 432.

"It is a preposterous thing that men can venture their souls where they will not venture their money; for they will take their religion upon trust, but would not trust a synod about the goodness of half-a-crown."—*William Penn.*

riches. The peace of the child was not broken until the attempt was made to obtain the grasp of the third apple: had but two been thought of, its happiness would have been great.[c]

28—30. (28) idol, better, *vessel*. A lamentation over Coniah's hard fate. He seemed to be idolised by the Jews, and this made his fate so sad. (29) O earth, *etc.*, the repetition expresses deep feeling, as if Jeremiah thoroughly joined in the lamentation over Coniah. (30) childless,[a] with none to succeed him; and so in him the proper line of Davidic kings became extinct.[b]

A call to hear the Word of the Lord (*v.* 29).—I. The subject of the address. 1. The Word of the Lord is unwritten as well as written; 2. It is threatening as well as promising. II. The duty inculcated in the address. 1. To hear and understand; 2. To hear and obey; 3. To hear and make known to others. III. The style of the address, apostrophe. 1. The universality of its range; 2. The earnestness and affection of its spirit.[c]

Indifference to God's message.—It is related of a well-known minister in the last century, that, having given out his text, he paused to notice its effects upon his congregation, but they were evidently too fashionably indifferent to be interested in anything so unimportant as a passage from Holy Writ. Shocked at the unconcern of his audience, and terrified by the sudden thought of their awful condition and his own responsibility, the good man leant forward in the pulpit and gave vent to the excitement of the moment in an outburst of passionate tears: an action so unusual could not but awaken attention to the sermon which followed, when, in a voice husky with emotion, and energetic from grief, he exhorted his hearers to have pity upon their own immortal souls and to grieve no longer the heart of their Father by apathy and neglect.

c *R. T. S*

a No son of Jeconiah's is found in the list of Jewish kings.

b "Though Messiah, the heir of David's throne, was lineally descended from Jeconiah, it was only through Joseph, who, though his legal, was not his real father."—*Fausset.*

v. 29. *S. Lavington*, ii. 365.

How many hearers of the Gospel are like Pharaoh's lean kine! They seem to devour everything, and digest nothing.

c *G. Brooks.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

1—4. (1) pastors, here *rulers*.[a] my pasture, they used the sheep as if they had independent rights over them, whereas the sheep were the Lord's, and they only under-shepherds, not owners. (2) scattered, *etc.*, *i.e.* the wrong-doing of the rulers first led the people away from God into idolatry, and then brought on them judgments and captivity. driven, E. shepherds never drive the sheep; the sheep follow them. (3) remnant, left out of the coming calamities. folds, better, *pastures*. fruitful, ch. iii. 16. (4) shepherds, such as Ezra, Nehemiah, etc. be lacking, needful supplies: or "none shall be missing."

The present God (*v.* 4).—I. The text proves the folly and sin of every form of idolatry. 1. It is senseless: 2. Sinful. II. The truth of the text should stimulate us to the cultivation of an incessantly devotional spirit. III. See in the text a source of sure consolation to the Christian amidst the sorrows to which he is exposed. IV. What a safeguard against the seductions of sin may these noble words prove. 1. We are self-tempted; 2. We are socially tempted: 3. We are Satanically tempted.[b]

Necessity for the existence of God.—Notwithstanding the consequences which may justly be dreaded by sinful and incorrigible beings, it is certainly of all things most desirable that there should be a God. Social order and civil government, with all

a Comp. Eze. xxxiv. 2.

b *J. H* in *Homilist.*

"Preaching to some hearers is like throwing a ball against a wall; all that is said to them seems to rebound upon the preacher, without producing any sensible effect. It is like playing upon a piano whose strings are all broken; there is no musical response. How is this? They are dead to the impressions which the truth is calcu-

lated to produce within them."—*John Bate.*

b Duncan.

the sublime contemplations of religion, its dignifying effect and powerful consolations, clearly depend on the grand principle that there is a Being who made and who governs the universe. Such a Being must be infinitely worthy of the adoration of His rational creatures: He must have a claim on their implicit obedience; and to Him they must all be accountable. Here lie the foundations of human happiness, and particularly of that moral excellence, which even in this life approximates the rational creature to its highest attainable perfection; here too are the securities, and the only effective securities, of every constitution calculated to promote the present or the future felicities of man.[b]

5—9. (5) **righteous branch,** *comp.* Is. iv. 2, xi. 1, liii. 2; Zec. iii. 8, vi. 12. **execute judgment,** the characteristic of the kingdom of Christ.[a] (6) **his days,** De. xxxiii. 28. **name,** *Jehovah Tsidkenu,* "the Lord our righteousness."[b] Righteousness here means "personal holiness," rather than "justification."[c] (7) **brought . . Egypt,** this had hitherto been regarded as the very highest manifestation of God's power and grace. (8) **north country,** the Prophet's description of Chaldæa. (9) **prophets,** *i.e.* the false prophets. **like a drunken man,** staggering under the words of Divine threatening which he had to utter.

The kingdom of the Messiah (*v.* 5).—I. The person of the Messiah. 1. His human incarnation: 2. His personal perfection; 3. His sovereign character. II. The nature of His kingdom. 1. Universal; 2. Mediatorial; 3. Spiritual; 4. Celestial. III. The character of His reign. 1. Legitimate; 2. Righteous; 3. Prosperous; 4. Everlasting.[d]—*Messiah's reign* (*v.* 5).—I. The character of Christ. There are three things we look for in a king. 1. Supreme power; 2. Legislative authority; 3. Righteous administration. II. The nature of His reign. 1. Spiritual: 2. Benevolent; 3. Equitable; 4. Perpetual. III. The prosperity with which that reign shall be attended. 1. Increase of willing subjects: 2. Provision for all their wants; 3. Security of their happiness: 4. Subjugation of their foes. Apply:—(1) How great the folly of His opponents: (2) How full of joy should be His subjects; (3) How zealous should they be for the extension of His power.[e]—*The Lord our righteousness* (*v.* 6).—I. Explain the title here given to the Redeemer. 1. The dignity of His nature; 2. The importance of His work; 3. The interest of His people in Him. II. Assign some reasons for the prominence of this title. Because it exhibits—1. A grand view of His character; 2. Views of His character which have been most virulently opposed; 3. But which must be most cordially embraced by His people.[f]

a Ps. lxxii. 2; Is. xi. 5, xxxii. 1.

b "He by whom Jehovah works righteousness."—*Hengstenberg.*

c "This view equally contains the doctrine of the Godhead of the Messiah, but not so directly. For it implies the existence of a vicegerent of God upon earth, by whom God will impart that perfect righteousness, to wh. no man can attain by himself."—*Spk. Com.*

d Eta in 400 Sks.

e Beta in 400 Sks.

"National happiness must be produced through the influence of religious laws."—*Southey.*

f G. Brooks

10—12. (10) **adulteress,** those living in immorality and sin. **swearing,** or of the curse, wh. iniquity has brought upon it.[a] **pleasant places,** or pastures. **course,** or mode of life. **force,** or heroism; "that on which they pride themselves as mighty men." (11) **profane,** common and unholy by reason of iniquity. (12) **slippery ways,** down which they must surely fall. **driven on,** pressed on by their very sins.[b] **visitation,** or the set time of Divine judgment.

Cure of profanity.—A merchant on fitting out a ship for India, told the captain, at the time of making the contract for the voyage, that he must engage not to swear, nor have any swear-

a Je. vi. 3.

b "External circumstances assist in urging on to ruin those who choose the dangerous path of vice."—*Spk. Com.*

After Dr. Scudder's return from India, he was upon a steamboat with his

ing among the crew. This must be the law of the ship. The captain said he was willing to reform. "But how can I suddenly break off an inveterate habit?" he inquired. "I will take care you are reminded of your duty," replied the owner. "Wear the ring that I will give you, and let the law of the vessel be explicitly known." The ring was provided, bearing this motto, "Swear not at all." The vessel performed the voyage, and returned to port. On inquiry, it was found that there had been no profaneness on board, excepting a little within the first twenty days after sailing; and the old habit was entirely destroyed.

13—16. (13) folly, the stupidity of prophesying by Baal. Heb. word means, *flavourless*, an unsavoury thing. (14) horrible thing, even worse things than in Samaria, &c. the privileges of Jerusalem were greater. strengthen, by the influence of their bad example. As Sodom, Is. i. 9. (15) wormwood, ch. viii. 14, ix. 15. profaneness, or hypocrisy; but better, *desecration*. (16) vain, *i.e.* they deceive you.[a] vision . . heart, *i.e.* one of their own invention, in wh. is no truth.

Strengthening the hands of the wicked (*v.* 14).—I. All sin is horrible in its nature. II. To strengthen the hands and hinder the repentance of sinners is to oppose the great plan of God's government. III. It tends to the misery of mankind. IV. It is to operate with the spirit of evil who works in the children of disobedience. V. It is a horrible thing because we thus become partakers of their sins. VI. It is directly contrary to God's commands, and is marked with His peculiar abhorrence. Apply —1. To teachers of religion, to Christians in general, to heads of families, and the young; 2. It is also a horrible thing to be strengthened in evil-doing.[b]

17—20. (17) still, they keep on saying. have peace, ch. vi. 14. imagination, or stubbornness. (18) who hath stood? meaning, "manifestly they have not." (19) whirlwind, ch. xxx. 23, or tempest, tornado. (20) not return, not be restrained or withdrawn.[a] latter days, those following on the great calamities.

Importance of self-knowledge.—Know thyself is one of the most useful and comprehensive precepts in the whole moral system; and it is well known in how great a veneration this maxim was held by the ancients, and in how high esteem the duty of self-examination necessary to it. Thales, the Milesian, the prince of the philosophers, who flourished about A.M. 3330, and was contemporary with Josiah, king of Judah, is said to be the first author of it, who used to say, that "for a man to know himself is the hardest thing in the world." It was afterwards adopted by Chylon the Lacædemonian: and is one of those three precepts which Pliny affirms to have been consecrated at Delphos in golden letters. It was afterwards greatly admired and frequently adopted by others, till at length it acquired the authority of a divine oracle, and was supposed to have been given originally by Apollo himself; of which general opinion Cicero gives us this reason, "Because it hath such a weight of sense and wisdom in it as appears too great to be attributed to any man." And this opinion of its coming originally from Apollo himself perhaps was the reason that it was written in golden capitals over the door of his temple at Delphos.[b]

son, when he heard a person using profane language. Accosting him, he said, "This boy was born and brought up in a heathen country and a land of idolatry; but, in all his life, he never heard a man blaspheme his Maker until now." The man apologised, and moved away ashamed.

a "They delude you with vain promises of security."—*Maurer.*

v. 15. *C. Barker*, 21.

"Beware of flattery; 'tis a flowery weed which oft offends the very idol vice whose shrine it would perfume."—*Fenton.*

b Dr. Lathrop.

a "The expression is taken from a messenger that comes back without doing his business."—*Lowth.*

"Self-love never yet could look on truth but with blear'd beams. Sleek Flattery and she are twin-born sisters, and so mix their eyes, as if you sever one, the other dies."—*Ben Jonson.*

Whitefield, when flattered, said, "Take care of fire; I carry powder about me."

b Mason.

21—24. (21) ran,[a] taking prophetical responsibilities upon themselves, and manifesting in the Prophet's work great eagerness. (22) my counsel, *c.* 18. The sign of the true prophet is his influence in favour of morality. (23) at hand, then surely I see the wickedness of these false prophets. (24) hide himself, Ps. cxxxix. 7.[b]

The true pulpit (*v.* 22).—The text enables us to sketch an ideal preacher. I. His mental position, "If they had stood in My counsel." This mental position is—1. Most necessary; 2. Most ennobling. II. His grand work caused My people to hear My words. 1. A most difficult work; 2. A most urgent work. III. His true test. 1. Conversion from evil is the great want of mankind; 2. The great tendency of God's Word.[c]

Soul-converting preachers.—There are preachers, by myriads and majorities, and deeply pious ones too, that never once in all their lives distinctly concentrated their purposes to the single point of converting men. Their efforts are to finish an eloquent sermon, to develop theological or Biblical truth, to thrill æsthetically an audience, to pour forth general religious emotion, to spread a popular fame, to gather crowds, to build a large church, etc. Verily these have often their reward, namely success in their objects. But here is a lonesome preacher, who does not object to all these; but with or without them, by study, by closet, by pulpit, by pastoral work, some or all, he means to convert souls, and just so many as he can. Where this is attained all the other success is well enough. Where this is not attained, all the other success does not comfort him a penny: he goes off crestfallen and disappointed, indignant at the devil and himself. He will not stay there where Satan has beaten him: but he will go where, please God, he can get some souls. Maffitt, in his golden days, did convert his thousands, surpassing Mr. Caughey in this respect, for that was his unerring aim. Bascom aimed to be the pulpit orator; his purpose terminated in the elaborate harangue, the thrilled audience, and the gathering crowd. He did not entertain the downright purpose of conversion. Summerfield terminated his effort with pouring his own rich religious emotions upon his melting congregation; but his emotion did not go forth into the sharp volition and the determined practical drudgery of action. And we think that this same analysis exercised upon every minister of strength and ability would, in nearly every case, bring out the answer to the question, What prevents this able minister from converting souls? He does not, in the full force of the word, try.[d]

25—28. (25) dreamed, De. xiii. 1. (26) deceit . . heart, none are so fully deceived as those who are *self-deceived*. (27) as their fathers, *see* Ju. iii. 7, viii. 33. (28) hath a dream, *i.e.* one really given to him by God. chaff, dreams out of men's mere imaginations. wheat, dreams communicated by God.

A suggested contrast (*v.* 28).—The contrast in this passage admits of a threefold application. 1. To true and false doctrines; 2. To true and false teachers; 3. To true and false professors.—*Religious truth and error* (*v.* 28).—I. That religious error is a human dream, but religious truth is a Divine word. 1. Because they imply a partial dormancy of the soul; 2. Because they are temporary illusions. II. That religious error as well as truth is allowed a voice in this world. This fact indicates—1. The

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a Je. xiv. 14, xxvii. 15, xxix. 9.

b "Are ye so ignorant as to suppose that I can only see things near Me, viz., things in heaven, and not earthly things as being too remote?"—*Faussel.*

vv. 23, 24. *Dr. J. Jortin*, i. 118; *W. Richardson*, i. 22.

v. 24. *S. Charnock*, i. 527; *Dr. W. Lupton*, 422; *Dr. R. Moss*, vi. 369; *Dr. W. Brackenridge*, 115; *C. Peters*, 179; *J. Wesley*, vii. 238; *Dr. R. Price*, 108; *A. Macdonald*, 54; *J. Fawcett*, i. 1; *W. Dealtry*, 22.

c Dr. Thomas.

"Many a time when we stand in the pulpit some sinner may be present to whom we are addressing our last message—who will never hear the Gospel, or be exhorted to take care of his soul again. Should we not wish to pour upon such a one the whole force of our powers of persuasion; to speak to him emphatically, in the words of Baxter, 'as a dying man to dying men'?"—*Christian Review.*

d Dr. Wheedon.

v. 28. *R. P. Buddicombe*, ii. 166; *R. Cecil*, iii. 178; *W. H. Henslow*, 15; *Dr. J. Fletcher*, iii. 75.

"Dreams, where thought, in fancy's maze, runs mad."—*Young.*

superior force of truth ; 2. Man's inalienable right to free speech. III. That the relative value of religious truth and religious error does not admit of comparison ; these dreams, errors, are chaff. This applies—To ideas and their expressions, to religion and its forms, to character and its accidents, to spiritual and secular worth.[a]

29—32. (29) like . . fire, you can tell it by its purifying power. hammer, breaking down man's pride, and convicting him of sin. (30) against . . prophets, *i.e.* purposing judgments on the false prophets. steal . . neighbour, *i.e.* try to catch up and imitate the true Prophets, bec. they have no message of their own. (31) use, better *smooth*. The intimation is that they talk, but have really nothing to say.[a] (32) lightness, vain, frivolous talking.

The Bible like a fire and a hammer (*v.* 29).—I. Like a fire heaven-kindled, all-penetrating, destructive, discriminating, refining, sanctifying. II. Like a hammer, heart hard and unimpressible, breaks down pride and self-righteousness. Apply :—1. Employ the Bible for our personal salvation ; 2. Maintain its authority and power against all gainsayers ; 3. Beware of immoderate expectations concerning effects.[b]

Superiority of the Bible.—This book is the mirror of the Divinity, the rightful regent of the world. Other books are planets shining with reflected lustre ; this book, like the sun, shines with ancient and unborrowed ray. Other books have, to their loftiest altitudes, sprung from earth ; this book looks down from heaven high. Other books appeal to understanding or fancy ; this book to conscience and faith. Other books solicit our attention ; this demands it.—it speaks with authority, and not as the scribes. Other books guide gracefully along the earth, or onward to the mountain summits of the ideal ; this, and this alone, conducts up the awful abyss which leads to heaven. Other books, after shining their season, may perish in flames fiercer than those which consumed the Alexandrian library ; this, in essence, must remain pure as gold, and unconsumable as asbestos, amidst the flames of general conflagration. Other books may be forgotten in the universe where suns go down and disappear like bubbles in the stream ; this book, transferred to a higher clime, shall shine as the brightness of that eternal firmament, and as those higher stars, which are for ever and ever.[c]

33—36. (33) forsake you, cast you away : throw you as a burden away into captivity. (34) say the burden, professing to be burdened with a Divine message. (35) answered, they were to speak in this form henceforth bec. the false prophets were making use of the word *burden*.[a] (36) word . . burden, *i.e.* it shall become a crushing burden to him.

Hints to preachers.—I. Preach Christ crucified, and dwell chiefly on the blessings resulting from His righteousness, atonement, and intercession. II. Avoid all needless controversies in the pulpit ; except it be when your subject necessarily requires it : or when the truths of God are likely to suffer by your silence. III. When you ascend the pulpit, leave your learning behind you : endeavour to preach more to the hearts of your people than

a Dr. Thomas.

a Vox et præterea nihil.

v. 29. *R. P. Buddicombe*, ii. 1 ; *Bp. S. Wilberforce*, 129.

b G. Brooks.

"As thieves be loth to assault a house where they know there be good armour and artillery, so, wherever the books of the Holy Scriptures be well occupied and exercised, there neither the devil nor any of his angels dare come near." —*Coverdray.*

"The truths of the Bible are like gold in the soil. Whole generations walk over it, and know not what treasures are hidden beneath. So centuries of men pass over the Scriptures, and know not what riches lie under the feet of their interpretation. Sometimes, when they discover them, they call them new truths. One might as well call gold newly dug new gold."—*Beecher.*

c G. Gilfillan.

a This had been Jeremiah's characteristic word, and Isaiah's. Prob. the false prophets took it up and used it partly in ridicule.

b Brewer.

"There is a kind of preachers risen up of late, who shroud and cover every rustical,

and unsavoury, and childish, and absurd sermon, under the name of the simple kind of teaching; like the Popish priests, who make ignorance the mother of devotion. But, indeed, to preach simply is not to preach rudely, nor unlearnedly, nor confusedly, but to preach plainly and perspicuously, that the simplest man may understand what is taught, as if he did hear his name." — *Henry Smith*, 1592.

to their heads. IV. Do not affect too much oratory. Seek rather to profit, than to be admired."[b]

Duty of the clergy.—The London *Times* delivered, some time since, an excellent homily to the English clergy, which applies equally well to ministers of all countries and denominations: "The clergy are ready to rely upon everything rather than on the substantial claims of their message. One party take to gay dresses, banners, and processions; another to penny readings, political lectures, and concerts. They change from one thing to another day by day, and the result is only a weary waste of their own time, and the creation of a certain amount of social feeling which might equally be produced without the supernatural aid of the Church and religion. Religious truths, if they are what they are believed to be, cannot need all this trivial machinery to recommend them; and the religious convictions, which are to be of any value, must be produced and sustained by more simple and permanent means. If we may judge by the history of the Church, both in early and modern times, a man of truly religious feeling needs nothing but a room and a Bible to bring about the greatest results. The one thing essential is not new plans and daily changes, but a belief in the power of the permanent truths of the Christian religion, and a devotion to these alone. The personal example and the public teaching of religion are the only necessary instruments of a clergyman, and, in our opinion, the less he is diverted from those to novel devices and elastic webs the better."

37—40. (37, 38) ye say, wilfully refusing in this to yield to My commands. (39) forget you, or burden you.[a] forsake you, by withdrawing My protection from you, leaving you to your calamities. (40) everlasting reproach, ch. xx. 11.

The office of the preacher.—If a man wants to indulge in levities, or fantasies, or imaginations, let him do it: I am not beset with superstitions. But still, if a child would play mumblety-peg, I would not advise him to go into the graveyard and play on his father's and mother's graves. There are proprieties and adaptations, and if a man is called merely to please, if he is to be a pleasure-monger, even of ideas, let him take the lecture-room or the theatre, let him go where pleasure is the normal end. But to take the Church, to take the crucified Saviour, to take the everlasting issues of human life, and in the midst of these tremendous verities, think of nothing but soft sentences, and sweet figures, and sentimental graces, and preaching these short sermons that please everybody, and particularly the closing passages of them—this I do not think is salutary. But if there is any case in which it is allowable, it is the case of men that preach for the sake of pleasing, and for that only. But they are said to be refined. Yes, they are refined. Oh! but they are said to be eloquent. Yes, they are eloquent. Oh! but they are said to be attractive. But when they stand on that awful, final day, between the living and the dead, before God Almighty's judgment, and all God's angels are gathered together, and there is nothing to stand between them and damnation, except elegancy, and refinement, and pleasant voices, and words, and gestures—in that hour, will it seem to them to have been worth their while to have bought their destruction at such a price?[b]

[a] Or I will carry you away as a burden. There is evident play on the word *burden* in these verses.

A clergyman, observing a poor man by the road breaking stones with a pickaxe, and kneeling to get at his work better, made the remark, "Ah, John! I wish I could break the stony hearts of my hearers as easily as you are breaking those stones." The man replied, "Perhaps, master, you do not work *on your knees*."

He that will learn of none but himself is sure to have a fool for his master.

[b] *Beecher.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

1—3. (1) after, *etc.*, 2 Kings xxiv. 12 ; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 10. In the eighth year of Nebuc.'s reign. (2) one basket, of the two (v. i.) put in the appointed place for offerings of firstfruits in the forecourt of the Temple. (2) first ripe, the fig bears three crops, of wh. the first is considered the best. so bad, perhaps bruised, perhaps of a bad sort.[a] (3) what seest thou? directing the Prophet's special attention to these figs.

Pictorial illustration.—Saints Cyril and Methodius, the earliest apostles of the Sclavonic tribes,—the Moravians, Bohemians, Hungarians, and Bulgarians,—were two Greek monks of the order of St. Basil, known as St. Cyril and St. Methodius, and connected in a very interesting manner with the history of religious art. Cyril was learned and eloquent, a philosopher and a poet : Methodius was considered an excellent painter of that time, when his country produced the only painters known. These two monks departed together, by order of the patriarch of Constantinople, to preach to the savage nations along the shores of the Danube. Bogaris, the king or chief of Bulgaria, having heard of the art of Methodius, required of him that he should paint a picture in the hall of his palace ; and that it should be "something terrible," to impress his subjects and vassals with awe. Methodius accordingly painted the Day of Judgment, representing at the summit our Lord seated in glory, and surrounded with angels : on His right, the resurrection of the blessed ; and, on His left, the doom of sinners, swallowed up in flames, and tormented by the most hideous demons. When the king desired to have the interpretation of this "terrible" picture, Cyril, who was as eloquent in words as Methodius was in colours and forms, preached to the barbarian monarch and his attendants such a sermon as converted them all on the spot. Their mission was extended successfully through the surrounding nations. While Methodius painted the doctrines of the Christian faith, Cyril explained them in the language of the people.[b]

4—7. (4, 5) acknowledge, or regard with special interest.[a] for their good, with a view to their deliverance from idolatry and to their spiritual blessing. (6) bring . . land, fulfilled in the restoration under Zerubbabel, etc. (7) return . . heart, *i.e.* heartily give up their idolatry, and give themselves again sincerely to the worship of Jehovah. "Repentance, though not the cause of pardon, is its invariable accompaniment."

Power of illustration.—We may safely assert that Jeremy Taylor is none the less vigorous for illustrating the long-suffering of God by the rabbinical story that the Archangel Michael, being God's messenger of vengeance, had but one wing, that he might labour in his flight ; while Gabriel had two wings, that he might "fly swiftly" when bringing the message of peace. And the nature of repentance and faith is set before us all the more clearly, when Adams likens Faith to a great queen in her progress, having Repentance as her messenger going before her, and Works as the attendants following in her train.[b]

a "The bad figs may have been those of the sycamore tree, which, unless they are punctured as they ripen, contain an acrid juice which renders them uneatable." — *Tristram.*

"This prophecy was designed to encourage the despairing exiles, and to reprove the people at home who prided themselves as superior to those in Babylon, and abused the forbearance of God." —*Fausset.*

A bishop of the Church of England, who was tutor to a princess, said to her, "I find that my instructions have made you but little better." She replied, "Ah! but my lord, you do not know how much worse I should have been without them."

b Mrs. Jameson.

a "To have a kindly feeling towards the object regarded."—*Lenderson.*

vv. 5—7. *H. Owen*, ii. 85.

v. 7. *R. Warnford*, i. 227; *T. Boudler*, ii. 267.

b J. G. Pilkington.

8—10. (8) evil figs, *v.* 3, by this term Zedekiah, and the remnant still in Judæa, are indicated. They were left in their corruptions, while by the captivity the rest of the nation were purified. (9) for their hurt, in distinction from the Divine purpose in the Babylonian captivity.[a] These were to be scattered without hope of return. (10) be consumed, so as never to be gathered together again.

Confirmed impenitence, the unpardonable sin.—In point of fact, anything that is supposed to constitute blasphemy against the Holy Ghost has apparently been committed and recovered from by men. It is said that it is speaking directly against the operations of God's Spirit. But thousands of men have spoken directly against them. "Ah!" it is said, "but it is doing it wantonly." But thousands have done it wantonly. "Well," it is said, "it is doing it maliciously." But thousands do it maliciously. There are thousands that rail at and revile the most notable fruits of a revival of religion, and are foamingly wicked, who yet, by-and-by, are broken down, become subjects of saving grace, and are made penitent. Was there ever a worse case than Paul's—a case in which there was more malignity, more bitterness, more venom, more railing against the Spirit of God, and more hatred towards the fruits of it in His children, than in his? And was there ever a case in which a man was more gloriously transformed than in his? There is not one single element which commentators and teachers have been accustomed to describe as blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which we do not know to be pardonable, because it has been pardoned. If it be a single act which men are liable to fall upon, it is remarkable that the Apostles did not, after the time of Christ, seize it, both for warning and for awful condemnation. How would it have fallen upon the heads of doomed men? But, except one passage in the first of John and the fifth chapter, there is almost no recognition of sins that are not to be pardoned. There is all the way through the New Testament the recognition of states that do not encourage much hope. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." This the Old Testament said centuries ago, and it has been sounding on in human experience and in human philosophy ever since. There is a state in which a man's conscience becomes so torpid, so dead, that there is no resurrection from it in this life; and that is what I understand to be substantially meant by the unpardonable sin. It is the sin of condition—of the whole moral condition—and not the sin of a specific act. In this case there was a specific act; but it brought the Saviour's condemnation upon it because it was symptomatic of a hopelessly sinful condition.[b]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

1—3. (1) fourth year, *comp.* Da. i. 1. Jehoiakim was prob. set on the throne by Necho about July, and Nebuc. mounted the throne in January, 604 B.C. So Nebuc.'s first year was partly the third and partly the fourth of Jehoiakim. (2, 3) from . . years, nineteen years in Josiah's reign, three months of Jehoahaz's, and

a Comp. De. xxviii. 25, 37.

"Sin is of one nature all the world over: for though a liar is not a drunkard, nor a swearer a whoremonger, nor either properly a murderer, yet they are all of a church, all branches of the one wicked root, all of kin; they have but one father, the devil, as Christ said to the professing Jews, the visible Church of that age; He slighted their claims to Abraham and Moses, and plainly told them, 'That he that committeth sin, was the servant of sin.'" — *W. Penn.*

"I have heard of a father who objected to teach his child to pray. The child broke his leg; and, while his leg was being taken off, he continued to curse and swear all the time. 'See!' said the physician, 'you have a point of conscience about teaching your child to pray; but Satan has no conscience about teaching him to swear.'" — *Spurgeon.*

b Beecher.

"Judge not the preacher; for he is thy judge: if thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not. God

four years of Jehoiakim's. rising early, the fig. for earnestly, ch. vii. 13.

Venn's account of Whitefield.—To give your ladyship any just description of what our eyes have witnessed and our hearts felt, within the last few days, exceeds my feeble powers. My inmost soul is penetrated with an overwhelming sense of the awful power and presence of Jehovah, who hath visited us with the blessed effusion of His Spirit, on this occasion, in a very eminent manner. Under Mr. Whitefield's first sermon, there was a visible appearance of much soul-concern among the immense crowd that filled every part of the burial-ground; so that many were overcome with fainting; others sobbed deeply: some wept silently; and a solemn concern appeared on the countenance of almost the whole assembly. When he came to press the injunction in the text (Isa. li. 1) upon the unconverted and the ungodly, his words seemed to cut like a sword upon several in the congregation: so that, whilst he was speaking, they could no longer contain, but burst out in the most piercing, bitter cries. At this juncture Mr. Whitefield made a pause of a few seconds, then burst into a flood of tears. During this short interval, Mr. Madan and myself stood up, and requested the people as much as possible to restrain from making any noise. Twice afterwards we had to repeat the same counsel, still advising the people to endeavour to moderate and bound their feelings, but not so as to resist or stifle their convictions. Oh, with what eloquence, what energy, what melting tenderness, did Mr. Whitefield beseech sinners to be reconciled to God—to come to Him for life everlasting, and rest their weary souls in Christ the Saviour! When the sermon was ended, the people seemed chained to the ground. Mr. Madan, Mr. Talbot, Mr. Downing, and myself, found ample employment in endeavouring to comfort those who seemed broken down under a sense of guilt. We separated in different directions among the crowd, and each was quickly surrounded by an attentive audience, still eager to hear all the words of this life. Of such a season as this it may well be said, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

4—7. (4) prophets, besides Jeremiah, Urijah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk had prophesied during this period. (5) turn, *etc.*,[a] 2 Ki. xvii. 13: Je. xviii. 11. xxxv. 15. (6) works . . hands, a severe and scornful description of the idols. (7) not hearkened, this was evident, for they had not *obeyed*.

Fidelity.—Some time ago, on a winter night, when the snow was falling heavily, a poor woman, with five children, reached a village in Essex, just as a farmer's lad was shutting up a barn. She begged him to ask his master's leave for them to pass the night in the barn. The lad did so: and the master, who was a kind, feeling man, ordered him to take a bundle of straw, and make them a comfortable bed. The poor woman felt grateful, and asked the lad if he would like to hear a song. He hoped that it would be something amusing, and replied, "Yes;" upon which she and her children sung one of Watts's hymns. The lad felt interested—she asked him if he had ever prayed to God, and thanked Him for the mercies he had enjoyed; and said that she was going to pray with her children, and he might stay if he

calleth preaching folly. Do not grudge to pick out treasures from an earthen pot. The worst speak something good; if all want sense, God takes a text and preaches patience."—*Herbert.*

An Indian having heard from a white man some strictures on zeal, replied, "I don't know about having too much zeal, but I think it is better the pot should boil over, than not boil at all."

Count Ziska, the brave Bohemian captain, commanded that, after death, his body should be flayed, and the skin be made into drum-heads to send dismay into the hearts of their enemies when his followers went out to battle for the faith.

a "The great summons of God to mankind, whether given by the Prophets of old, by John the Baptist, or by the Apostles and their successors."—*Syk. Com.* v. 4. *J. Grosse*, ii. 81; *J. Barlow*, *Worb. Lec.* 31.
v. 6. *B. Beddome*, v. 119.
During a flood in St. Petersburg, the sentinel before the palace refused to leave his post (though ordered so to do

by the empress, and death by drowning seemed imminent) till relieved by the proper officer.

b Whitecross.

a "The sound of the hand-mill is a familiar one in the East, and its cessation is aptly mentioned by the Prophets as one of the signs of utter desolation."—*Van Lennep.*

b "No *night-light:* so universal in the East, that the poorest house has it burning all night."—*Fausset.*

Job xxi. 17.

vv. 11, 12. *J. Ely,* 232.

"There are some diseases that are called the reproaches of physicians; and there are some people that may be truly called the reproaches of ministers; and those are they who are great hearers, and talkers, and admirers of ministers, but never obey the doctrines delivered by them."—*T. Brooks.*

c Henry Smith.

"Those auditors who can find nothing to do but note elegant words and phrases, or rhetorical colours, or perhaps an ill grace of gesture in a pithy and material speech, argue themselves full ere they come to the feast; and therefore go away with little pleasure, and no profit."—*Bp. Hall.*

pleased. The lad stayed while she offered up her thanks for the mercies she enjoyed; and begged for a blessing upon him. He then went away, but could not rest, and after passing a sleepless night, he resolved on going again to the barn to talk with the woman. She was gone—he saw her no more, but from that day he became a changed character.[b]

8—11. (8, 9) **families . . north,** ch. i. 13, 14, races from the great region watered by the Tigris and Euphrates. **my servant,** so called as being appointed to execute a Divine commission. **astonishment,** ch. ii. 11, v. 30. **hissing,** ch. xviii. 16, xix. 8. (10) **millstones,** the household mill, at which each day's supply of corn was ground by the women.[a] **light . . candle,**[b] in inhabited houses the candle was kept burning thro' the night, and it was the sign of life.

Motives of hearers.—As there were wise virgins and foolish virgins; so there are wise hearers, and foolish hearers. Some are so nice, that they had rather pine than take their food of any which is licensed by a bishop; as if Elias should refuse his food because a raven brought it to him and not an angel; some come unto the service to save forfeiture, and then they stay the sermon for shame; some come because they would not be counted atheists; some come because they would avoid the name of papists; some come to please their friends. One hath a good man to his friend, and lest he should offend him, he frequents the preacher's, that his friend may think well of him; some come with their masters and mistresses for attendance: some come with a fame; they have heard great speech of the man, and therefore they will spend one hour to hear him once, but to see whether it be so as they say; some come because they are idle, to pass the time they go to a sermon, lest they should be weary of doing nothing; some come with their fellows: one saith, let us go to the sermon; content, saith he, and he goeth for company; some hear the sound of a voice as they pass by the church and step in before they be aware: another hath some occasion of business, and he appoints a friend to meet him at such a sermon, as they do at St. Paul's; all these are accidental hearers, like children which sit in the market, and neither buy nor sell. But, as many foxes have been taken when they came to take, so they which come to spy, or wonder, or gaze, or scoff, have changed their minds before they went home, like one which finds when he doth not seek.[c]

The rambling hearer.—He belongs to no Christian church. One minister, however excellent, he thinks, cannot be sufficient. "A variety, a variety, you know," he says, "is always best." From place to place he wanders, and may justly be called "the strolling professor." "Oh," says he, "I have found such an excellent man! I never heard his equal! If you could hear him, you would be charmed indeed!" But this rambling hearer cannot be a fixed one long. "Mr. M—— is come to town. Such a preacher!" Away he goes. His favourite preacher is deserted for a time: but he returns; and now his favourite minister is rather flat, wordy, uninteresting. In short, this man is everywhere. There is no preacher but he knows; no church or chapel, but he is there for a time. Ah! but where is the benefit from all this? "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

12—14. (12) seventy years, this number may be intended as a figure for the *complete* period ordered in the Divine Providence.[a] The number *seven* is in Scrip. the symbol of perfection or completion. punish, *etc.*,[b] comp. Isa. x. 5, 16. perpetual desolations, *v.* 9,[c] true of its condition to the present day. (13) this book, *i.e.* the record of Jeremiah's prophecies. (14) serve themselves, *i.e.* they shall carry out their own schemes by reducing the Chaldæans to slavery. This was fulfilled in Cyrus and his confederates. deeds, treatment of the Jews.

Fulfilment of prophecy.—Two rabbis, approaching Jerusalem, observed a fox running upon the hill Zion. And Rabbi Joshua wept; but Rabbi Eliezer laughed. "Wherefore dost thou laugh?" said he who wept. "Nay, wherefore dost thou weep?" demanded Eliezer. "I weep," replied the Rabbi Joshua, "because I see what is written in the Lamentations fulfilled: "Because of the Mount Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it." "And therefore," said Rabbi Eliezer, "do I laugh; for, when I see with mine own eyes that God has fulfilled His threatenings to the very letter, I have thereby a pledge that not one of His promises shall fail; for He is evermore ready to show mercy than judgment."

a Comp. Da. ix. 2, 24.

b "Though the Chaldæans and other nations were instruments in the hands of God in punishing the Jews, yet, as they had no knowledge of this fact, but merely gratified their cruel and ambitious passions, they, in their turn, thereby contracted guilt for which Jehovah threatens to punish them."—*Henderson.*

c Je. l. 40.

15—17. (15) wine .. fury, *lit.* "The cup of wine, even this fury."[a] This figure expresses "stupefying judgments."[b] to drink it, this offering of the wine-cup took place *in vision.* (16) moved .. mad, having all the symptoms of drunkenness; excited, restless, unable to plan wisely. sword, the symbol of war. (17) took the cup, Jer. is here narrating what he had done *in his vision. Michaelis* needlessly suggests that Jer. offered the wine-cup to the ambassadors of the nations who were at Jerusalem.

The fiend of alcohol.—

There walketh a fiend o'er the glad green earth,
By the side of the reaper, Death,
He dazzles alike with the glow of his mirth,
Or quenches the light of the household hearth,
With his foul and withering breath.

He stalketh abroad with his hydra-head,
And there gather in his train
The falling foot and the strong man's bread,
The restless living—the ghastly dead,
And misery, want, and pain.

He nerves the arm of relentless hate,
With the goblet's headed foam;
He lurks in the halls of the rich and great,
In the beggar's hut—at the palace gate,
And curses the poor man's home.

He barters the wealth of a good man's name,
For the wine-cup's treacherous glow;
And snatches the pinions of deathless fame,
Till they drop with their burden of guilt and shame,
'Mid the dregs of sin and woe.

a Ps. lx. 3; Je. xiii. 12, 13.

b "God's judgments are metaphorically represented by a cup of intoxicating liquors, bec. they fill men with astonishment, and bereave them of their common judgment and discretion."—*Lowth.* Ps. lxxv. 8; Is. li. 17; Je. xlviii. 26, xlix. 12, li. 31; Ha. ii. 16; Re. xiv. 10, xvi. 19. "This is an allusion to those intoxicating draughts which used to be given to malefactors just before their execution, to take away their senses. Immediately before the execution began, says the Talmud, they gave the condemned a quantity of frankincense in a cup of wine, to stupefy him, and render him insensible of his pain. The compassionate ladies of Jerusa-

lem generally provided this draught at their own cost. The foundation of this custom was the command of Solomon, Pro. xxxi. 6."—*Lewis.*
c Household Words.

a "Jerusalem must first drink of it, because judgment begins at the house of God." — *Wordsworth.*

b Mat. Henry.

"This clause may, however, have been inserted by Jer., at his final revision of his prophecies in Egypt."—*Fausset.*

c "Auxiliaries." —*Gesenius.*

d Herodotus.

e "The islands and maritime regions where the Phœnicians had planted colonies." —*Henderson.*

"Contempt is frequently regulated by fashion." —*Zimmerman.*

"It is the curse of kings, to be attended by slaves, that take their humours for a warrant to break within the bloody house of life; and, on the winking of authority, to understand a law." —*Shakespeare.*

"I am no courtier, no fawning dog of State, to lick and kiss the hand that buffets me; nor can I smile upon my guest, and praise

For the fiend still walketh with cruel will,
With a swift and restless tread,
That he may by his guilesome, subtle skill,
Gather alike both the good and the ill
With the ruined and the dead.

But a summons we hear that comes from heaven,
With this deadly fiend to fight;
And though his power be sevenfold seven,
To us that oppose 'tis assuredly given
To conquer, and put him to flight.*c*

18—22. (18) **kings**,*a* poss. to include Jeconiah and Zedekiah, the successors of Jehoiakim, as well as that monarch. **as . . day**, "in the fourth year of Jehoiakim things had come into a very bad posture."*b* (19) **Pharaoh**, the general title of the Egyptian kings, like Shah, or Czar. (20) **mingled people**, Heb. *Ereb*, prob. foreign mercenaries, serving in Egypt;*c* or the mixed races on the shores of the Red Sea. **Uz**, a district of Edom. **Philistines**, on the southern borders of the Mediterranean. **Azzah**, or Gaza. **remnant of Ashdod**, this town had been captured and destroyed by Psammeticus,*d* after a siege of 29 years. (21, 22) **Tyrus . . Zidon**, the great Phœnician seaports. **isles**, or coast-lands of the Mediterranean.*e*

House-warming.—On the marriage of their majesties, some difficulties existed as to a suitable residence: St. James's Palace was falling fast to decay; Buckingham House required great repairs; and Windsor Castle was actually in a state of dilapidation. After due consideration, the little palace at Kew was adopted as the temporary residence of the royal pair, while the necessary repairs were made on Buckingham House and Windsor Castle. When the latter was put in a state fit for their reception, their majesties gave what is called a house-warming. The king showed, on this occasion, his real kindness of disposition, by the activity which he displayed in making ready for his guests—exploring kitchen, storerooms, and every apartment, to see that all was going on right, and that proper cheer was provided, not merely for the higher orders, but even for the soldiers in attendance. No host could receive all his visitors in a more friendly, courteous, and hospitable manner. He had an abundance of civil things to say to everybody—pithy observations to the men, and agreeable compliments to the ladies. He kept every one in a good humour, and always spared them the trouble of making long ceremonious answers. The royal family dined at a separate table, a table elevated. This etiquette of a distinct table was kept up all through the reign, though in some of the proudest courts of Europe it is by no means strictly adhered to. It was observed also when his majesty visited any of his subjects. He commenced the dignity of his habits early, and preserved it to the end. His predecessors of the Brunswick line were more familiar on this point, and court anecdotes mention the fears entertained by a certain German lady of the convivial effects of Sir Robert Walpole's punch on a monarch's conversation. Her fears were, by the way, not altogether unreasonable, for Sir R. Walpole himself used to say that he governed the king with good punch and bad Latin. The love of punch was one of the German faults of the old monarch; and was strikingly contrasted

with the extreme abstemiousness which distinguished his successor, George the Third, who seldom indulged in more than a glass of weak wine at a time. When calling it a German fault, we must, at the same time, do to the German character the justice of observing that it is a fault of old date, and one from which, at more recent times, it has almost wholly redeemed itself. The queen used to tell on this head a pleasant anecdote, which the king took great pleasure in repeating. The Duke of Mecklenburg, father of the queen, being once in familiar conversation with the late Pope, he was asked by his Holiness "whether his countrymen, the Germans, continued to drink as hard as they used to do?" "Oh, no," replied the duke; "the sottish custom is quite given over, except in the ecclesiastical electorates!"[f]

23—26. (23) **Dedan**, Ge. xxv. 3, 4: Is. xxi. 13. **Tema** .. **Buz**, neighbouring tribes of Arabia. Job xxxii. 2. **corners**, *lit.* "All who have the corners of their hair shorn:"[a] a description of the tribe of Kedar. (24) **mingled people**, not the same as *v.* 20. Prob. the mixed tribes east and south of the Dead Sea.[b] (25) **Zimri**,[c] prob. a tribe on the east side of the desert, towards Persia: but not identified. **Elam**, at the head of the Persian Gulf, used for Persia. (26) **Sheshach**, or Babylon,[d] ch. li. 41.

The money spent in alcohol in Great Britain would every year support 200,000 missionaries (which would be about one to every 3,000 adult heathen) at £200 each; 2,000 superannuated missionary labourers at £100 each; 100,000 schoolmasters at £100 each; build 2,000 churches and chapels at £2,000 each: build 200 schools at £500 each; give to 50,000 widows 5s. each per week; issue 50,000 Bibles every day at 1s. 6d. each, and 100,000 tracts every day at 4s. per hundred; and present to 192,815 poor families £10 each on Christmas Day; or it would, in one year, supply each human being on the globe with a Bible: or it would, in one year, provide 200 hospitals at £20,000 each: 12,000 churches and chapels at £2,000 each; 10,000 schools at £600 each; 2,000 mechanics' institutions and lecture halls at £2,000 each; 25,000 almshouses at £200 each; 1,000 baths at £2,000 each: 2,000 libraries at £500 each; 200 public parks at £5,000 each; give 400,000 poor families £10 each: and present a new Bible to each man, woman, and child in Great Britain. So that the money spent in Great Britain alone, for strong drink, would, as far as outward ministry is concerned, evangelise the world—besides providing largely for temporal distress.[e]

27—29. (27) **be drunken**, *etc.*, "metaphors denoting the utter helplessness to which the nations are reduced by drinking the wine-cup of fury."[a] (28) **refuse to take**, endeavour to master the circumstances of difficulty and distress in which they will be placed.[b] (29) **should .. unpunished?** if God did not spare His own people, there could be no hope for them.

Duty and danger.—The perils of good men in former days. Persecution; special trials and deliverances; Apostles the only preachers, hence, and for other reasons, God specially protected them. The common prison: strong, where common malefactors were kept. Subject,—Duty and danger. I. Duty often involves danger. This the case with nearly every duty. Work, a duty, exposes to various risks. To save one from drowning or burning, a duty, yet there may be danger. A duty to live a Christian

his stomach, when I know he feeds on poison, and death disguised sits grinning at my table."—*Sewel.*

f Percy Anec.

a Je. ix. 26.

b "A mixture of people in that part of Arabia, properly called the Desert, consisting of the Nabatheans, Amalekites, Midianites, and other nations, called in Scrip. by the general name of the *children of the East.*"—*Lowth.*

Nomad Arabs.

c Syr. renders *Zamron*, which may connect with *Zimran*, see Ge. xxv. 2.

d "In the Cabalistic system, called Athbash; the first Heb. letter being expressed by the last, Sheshach, would exactly answer to Babel."—*Wordsworth.*

e Newman Hall.

a Spk. Com.

b "If they either do not believe thy threatenings, or else disregard them, as thinking themselves sufficiently provided against any hostile invasion."—*Lowth.*

"There is no sin which doth more deface God's image than drunkenness; it dis-

guiseth a person, and doth even unman him. Drunkenness makes him have the throat of a fish, the belly of a swine, and the head of an ass. Drunkenness is the shame of nature, the extinguisher of reason, the shipwreck of chastity, and the murder of conscience. Drunkenness is hurtful to the body; the cup kills more than the cannon; it causes dropsies, catarrhs, apoplexies; it fills the eye with fire, and the legs with water, and turns the body into a hospital."—*T. Watson.*

c Hive.

"We talk about 'fetching up' a lost hour, but the thing is impossible. A moment once lost is lost for ever. We could as rationally set out to find a sound that had expired in air, as to find a lost moment."—*Angell James.*

d R. T. S.

a Joel iii. 16; Am. i. 2.
b Comp. Is. xvi. 9, 10; Je. xlviii. 33.
c "The thunderstorm seen first on the edge of the horizon overspreads the heaven, and travels from nation to nation in its destructive course."—*Spk. Com.*
"If a catalogue were made of all the truths that

life, but it often entails danger: cross words, opposition, petty persecution. II. Danger does not absolve us from duty. When the doors were opened the angel did not tell the Apostles to go away from the city, but to proceed with their work and in the most public place. Other men would be in great danger, spiritual and eternal, if they did not hear "all the words of this life." III. God our trust and protection from danger, while we are in the way of duty. He saw His servants in prison: did not abandon them, sent an angel, etc. May not work a miracle in our behalf; but will not neglect us, sends inward supports if not outward deliverances. Learn:—Better to have external things against us, and our conscience at peace, than conscience disturbing us in the midst of surrounding prosperity.[c]

A minister.—The late Rev. R. Hall observed, in conversation with a friend, "You remember Mr. ——, sir?" "Yes, very well." "Were you aware of his fondness for brandy and water?" "No." "It was a sad habit; but it grew out of his love of story-telling; and that also is a bad habit, a very bad habit, for a minister of the Gospel. As he grew old, his animal spirits flagged, and his stories became defective in vivacity; he therefore took to brandy and water; weak enough, it is true, at first, but soon nearly 'half-and-half.' Ere long, he indulged the habit in a morning; and when he came to Cambridge, he would call upon me, and before he had been with me five minutes, ask for a little brandy and water, which was of course to give him artificial spirits to render him agreeable in his visits to others. I felt great difficulty, for he, you know, sir, was much older than I was; yet being persuaded that the ruin of his character, if not of his peace, was inevitable, unless something was done, I resolved upon one strong effort for his rescue. So the next time that he called, and, as usual, said, 'Friend Hall, I will thank you for a glass of brandy and water;' I replied, 'Call things by their proper names, and you shall have as much as you please.' 'Why! do I not employ the right name? I ask for a glass of brandy and water.' 'That is the current, but not the appropriate name; ask for a glass of liquid fire, and distilled damnation, and you shall have a gallon!' Poor man! he turned pale, and for a moment seemed struggling with anger. But knowing that I did not mean to insult him, he stretched out his hand, and said, 'Brother Hall, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.' From that time he ceased to take brandy and water."[d]

30—33. (30) **roar**, *etc.*,[a] as a lion, filling with consternation both the shepherds and their sheep. **upon his habitation**, upon Judæa, his *pasturage*. **shout**, the vintage cry.[b] (31) **a noise**, that made by the trampling of the invaders. (32) **evil**, in the sense of *calamity*. **whirlwind**, ch. xxiii. 19. **coasts**, or sides, as ch. vi. 22.[c] (33) **not lamented**, ch. viii. 2. xvi. 4.

Hypocrisy.—In the pursuit of pastoral duty, I stood a little while ago in a cheesemonger's shop, and being in a fidgety humour, and having a stick in my hand, I did what most Englishmen are sure to do—I was not content with seeing, but must needs touch as well. My stick came gently upon a fine cheese in the window, and, to my surprise, a most metallic sound emanated from it. The sound was rather hollow, or one might have surmised that all the tasteholes had been filled up with sovereigns, and thus the cheese had been greatly enriched, and the merchant

had been his own banker. There was, however, a sort of crockery jingle in the sound, like the ring of a huge bread or milk pan, such as our country friends use so abundantly; and I came to the very correct conclusion that I had found a very well got-up hypocrite in the shop-window. Mark, from this time, when I pass by, I mentally whisper, "Pottery:" and the shams may even be exchanged for realities, but I shall be long in believing it. In my mind the large stock has dissolved into potsherds, and the fine show in the window only suggests the potter's vessel. The homely illustration is simply introduced because we find people of this sort in our churches, looking extremely like what they should be, yet having no substance in them, so that if, accidentally, one happens to tap them somewhere or other with sudden temptation or stern duty, the baked earth gives forth its own ring, and the pretender is esteemed no longer.[d]

34—38. (34) **shepherds**, fig. for kings and rulers. **wallow**, cover yourselves over with; roll yourselves about in. **principal** . . **flock**, *lit.* "the strong ones of the flock," *i.e.* the leaders of society; the great and rich men. **pleasant vessel**, or vessel of desire.[a] "Destroyed as a crystal glass." (35) **to flee**, *lit.* flight shall fail the shepherds. (36) **hath spoiled**, or spoileth, ch. vi. 2, 3. (37) **peaceable habitations**, or pastures of peace: where the flocks lately dwelt safely. (38) **forsaken his covert**, and come forth to judgment. **oppressor**, Heb. *jonah*, signifying also a *dove*.[b]

Hypocrisy and sincerity.—Consider, hypocrisy lies close in the heart; if thou art not very careful thou mayest easily pass a false judgment on thyself. They who were sent to search the cellar under the Parliament, at first saw nothing but coals and winter provisions; but upon a review, when they came to throw away that stuff, they found all but provision for the devil's kitchen: then the mystery of iniquity was uncased, and the barrels of powder appeared. How many are there that, from some duties of piety they perform, some seeming zeal they express in profession, presently cry, "*Omnia bene*," and are so kind to themselves as to vote themselves good Christians, who, did they but take the pains to throw those aside, they might find a foul hypocrite at the bottom of them all. Hypocrisy often takes up her lodging next door to sincerity, and so she passes unfound, the soul not suspecting hell can be so near heaven. And as hypocrisy, so sincerity is hard to be discovered. This grace often lies low in the heart, like the sweet violet in some valley or near some brook, hid with thorns and nettles—infirmities, I mean; so that there requires both care and wisdom, that we neither let the weed of hypocrisy stand, nor pluck up the herb of grace in its stead.[c]

have been discovered by wrangling in company, or by solemn disputation in the schools, I believe it would appear that the contending parties might have been employed as advantageously to mankind, and much more so to themselves, in whipping a top or brandishing a rattle."—*Dr. Brattie.*

d C. H. Spurgeon.

a "Your past excellency shall not render you safe now. I will turn to your ignominy whatever glory I conferred on you."—*Calvin.*

LXX. render, "Ye shall fall like chosen rams."

b "There may be a covert allusion to the Chaldæan standard bearing a dove on it, in honour of Semiramis, the first queen, said in popular superstition to have been nourished by doves when exposed at birth, and at death to have been transformed into a dove."—*Fausset.*

c A Divine of the Seventeenth Century.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1—7. (1) **beginning**, *etc.*, "prob. soon before the critical battle of Carchemish, wh. established the supremacy of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon."[a] (2) **in the court**, the largest court, where the males assembled for worship. (3) **repent me**, ch. xviii. 8. (4—6) **like Shiloh**, ch. vii. 12, 14. (7) **heard**,

a Je. xxv. 1, 11.

Clytie was a water-nymph who loved the sun-god without any return. She

constantly gazed at the object of her affection, looking at him when he rose, and while he passed his daily course. She saw no other object. At last her limbs rooted, and her face became the sun-flower, which turns on its stem so as always to look at the sun.

"Honour with some is a sort of paper credit, with which men are obliged to trade who are deficient in the sterling cash of morality and religion."—*Zimmermann.*

etc., Jer. spoke publicly, and at a time when the court was full of people.

Heroic constancy.—A mother and her seven sons were brought before the tyrant Antiochus in the persecution of the Jews, and offered a discharge if they would but taste swine's flesh. They unanimously refused, were "tormented with scourges and whips," but still refused. "What wouldst thou ask of us? We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers," they said. The enraged king ordered the speaker to be slain in the most excruciating manner. His mother and six brothers were compelled to witness his awful agony, yet, with unshaken constancy, exhorted one another to die manfully. The second son follows the first to martyrdom. The third stretched out his hands to the executioner to be cut off, saying, "These I had from heaven, and for his laws I despise them." The fourth, fifth, and sixth sons endured torture and death with the same dauntless fidelity. The mother and her youngest son remain. The mangled members of her six sons strew the ground. Antiochus now lays bribes before the youth. Wealth and station are proffered him, if he will but taste. The nobler than Spartan mother addresses him: "I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider that God made them of things that were not; and so was mankind made likewise. Fear not this tormentor, but, being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee in mercy again with thy brethren." O wonderful woman! The record runs, "Last of all, after the sons, the mother died." These Jewish martyrs inherited the promise, being "faithful unto death."

8—11. (8) priests and prophets, these were more bitter against Jer. than the princes were. took him, apprehended him, to put him on his trial, as a disturber of the Government, and for discouraging the people from defending their country against the enemy.[a] (9) why, they assume that the thing that Jer. prophesied was absolutely impossible.[b] (10) princes, who would not have the priests and people take the government out of their hands. new gate, or east gate. A judicial court was at once constituted. (11) worthy to die,[c] and they demand instant judgment and execution.

Failing in Christian constancy.—You are thinking of the thriving tradesman whose upward course you marked for so many years. How regular he was in the sanctuary! How fervent his zeal! How admirable his devotedness to God! In business affairs he was honest, and affable, and diligent, and the hand of the Lord prospered him. His liberality increased, and many rejoiced in his light, or sat under his shadow with great delight. He was a pillar, at once adding to the comeliness and to the strength of the building. His beneficence continues to this day; but what about his personal service? What about his religious habits? Where is his former activity? Where is now his zeal, once so urgent that it almost verged upon fanaticism? Ah! was it then, just then, when the Lord increased his capabilities and augmented his resources of usefulness—was it then that the spirit of the world crept in? Is his zeal a matter of history? Do the children of the church know anything about him? Do they wonder that he was ever such an orderly, punctual, active office-bearer as their fathers tell them he was—he, so

a "They accused him of uttering falsehood in the name of Jehovah, a crime wh. was threatened in the law of Moses with death."—*Henderson.*

b Comp. Ac. vi. 13, 14.

c Lit. "a sentence of death is to this man," *i.e.* is due to him.

"Honour, my lord, is much too proud to catch at every slender twig of nice distinction. These for th' unfeeling vulgar may do well; but those whose souls are by the nicer rule of virtuous delicacy only sway'd, stand at another bar than that of laws."—*Thomson.*

"Honours a-

infrequent in his attendance on the sanctuary—he, so proverbial for his lateness, partly habitual, partly sensational when he does come—he, whose voice is so seldom heard in prayer—he, who never gladdens the humble ones of the Lord's vintage by his presence in their goodly fellowship—he, who has left all the toil of the Redeemer's service to be done by his poorer brethren, condoning for his forsaken labour by his willingness, it may be to direct, and it may be to subscribe. Is it so that the spirit of the world has crept in, and that, in grievous abandonment of his former energy, he has grown weary in well-doing?[d]

12—15. (12) the Lord sent me, so as a Divinely commissioned prophet he was above all human tribunals. The answer of Jer. is simple and straightforward. (13) amend, *etc.*, ch. vii. 3. (14) in your hand, he was quite willing to submit to lawful government, but whatever the result, he must simply deliver the Divine message.[a] (15) innocent blood, *i.e.* the guilt of putting the innocent to death.

Character of a minister.—A minister's character is the lock of his strength, and if once this is sacrificed he is, like Samson shorn of his hair, a poor, feeble, faltering creature, the pity of his friends and the derision of his enemies. I would not have bad ministers screened, nor would I have good ones maligned. When a preacher of righteousness has stood in the way of sinners, and walked in the counsel of the ungodly, he should never again open his lips in the great congregation until his repentance is as notorious as his sin. But while his character is unsullied, his friends should preserve it with as much care against the tongue of the slanderer as they would his life against the hand of the assassin. When I consider the restless malignity of the great enemy of God and holiness, and add to this his subtlety and craft; when I consider how much his malice would be gratified and his schemes promoted by blackening the character of the ministers of the Gospel; when I consider what a multitude of creatures there are who are his vassals, and under his influence, creatures so destitute of moral principle and so filled with venomous spite against religion as to be prepared to go any lengths in maligning the righteous, and especially their ministers, I can account for it on no other ground than that of a special interposition of Providence, that the reputation of Christian pastors is not more frequently attacked by slander and destroyed by calumny. But probably we see, in this as in other cases, that wise arrangement of Providence by which things of delicacy and consequence are preserved by calling forth greater solicitude for their safety. Church members should, therefore, be tremblingly alive to the importance of defending their minister's character. They should neither expect to see him perfect nor hunt after his imperfections. When they cannot but see his imperfections—imperfections which, after all, may be consistent with not only real but eminent piety—they should not take pleasure in either magnifying or looking at them, but make all reasonable excuse for them, and endeavour to lose sight of his infirmities in his virtues, as they do the spots of the sun amid the blaze of radiance with which they are surrounded.[b]

16—19. (16) spoken . . name, if Jer. was a *true* prophet, it

chieved far exceed those that are created."—*Solon.*

"A Christian is the highest style of man."—*Pope.*

d W. M. Punshon.

a See De. xviii. 20.

Comp. Jos. ix. 25; 2 Sa. xv. 26; Da. iii. 16.

"Dignity of honour.—Base, grov'lling souls ne'er know true honour's worth, but weigh it out in mercenary scales: the secret pleasure of a generous act is the great mind's great bribe."—*Dryden.*

"Love's common unto all the mass of creatures, as life and breath; honour to man alone; honour being then above life, dishonour must be worse than death; for fate can strike but one, reproach doth reach whole families."—*Curtwright.*

"As all things that have life court whatever helps and solaces and succours it, and shuns injurious influences, so the believer applies to all the appointed means for the support and nourishment of his life, and guards it from the attack of all adverse powers, within and without."—*Dr. Leifchild.*

b J. A. James.

was their duty to listen to his message.[a] (17) elders,[b] *i.e.* some of the elder ones among these princes. (18) Micah, *etc.*,[c] comp. Mic. i. 1, iii. 12. This was a denunciation, and a prophecy of national calamities, like the prophecy of Jeremiah. (19) fear the Lord, so as to give heed to His message. besought the Lord, *lit.* "soothed by prayer the face of the Lord."[d] thus, *etc.*, *i.e.* by doing any evil to Jer.

Zion a desolation.—Morning dawned: and with my kind host, to whom every spot in and around Jerusalem was familiar, I ascended to the terraced roof. Just behind Moriah, the Tyropean valley was distinctly marked by a deeply-shaded dell, running from north to south through the city. Beyond it rose Zion, higher and longer than Moriah. . . . . As I looked, a moving object in one of the fields riveted my attention. "Haste, give me the glass," I said. I turned it upon the spot. Yes, I was right; a plough and a yoke of oxen were there at work. Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled before my eyes.[e]

20—24. (20) Urijah, we have no other reference to this prophet.[a] Kirjath-jearim, Jos. ix. 17. (21) mighty men, captains of his army. (22) Elnathan, 2 Ki. xxiv. 8. Achbor, 2 Ki. xxii. 12. (23) fetched, *etc.*, Jehoiakim was at the time a vassal of Egypt, so one accused of treason would be readily surrendered to him. graves, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxiii. 6. (24) nevertheless, in spite of this attempt to urge the prince to put Jer. to death. Ahikam, 2 Ki. xxii. 12, 14.

Advantage of constancy.—It is easy to keep that armour bright which is daily used; but, hanging by the wall till it be rusty, it will take some time and pains to furbish it over again. If an instrument be daily played upon, it is easily kept in tune: but let it be awhile neglected, and the strings and frets break, the bridge flies off, and no small labour is required to bring it into order again. And thus also it is in things spiritual, in the performance of holy duties; if we continue them with a settled constancy, they will be easy, familiar, and delightful to us: but, if once intermitted, it is a new work to begin again, and the former estate will not be attained but with much endeavour and great difficulty.[b]

a "A prophet could not be put to death unless he prophesied *in the name of other gods*; or after his prophecy had failed in its accomplishment."—*Fausset.*
b Ac. v. 21.
c "He prophesied in the time of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and was contemporary with Hosea and Amos in Israel, and with Isaiah in Judah."—*Wordsworth.*
d 2 Chr. xxxii. 26.
e *Dr. Porter.*
a "The circumstances detailed in this and the three following verses appear to have been adduced in opposition to what had been related respecting Micah; and as they had taken place in the reign of the present monarch, they furnished an apt precedent for the condemnation of Jeremiah."—*Henderson.*
"Without constancy there is neither love, friendship, nor virtue in the world."—*Addison.*
b *Spencer.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

1—4. (1) Jehoiakim, this is prob. an error for Zedekiah.[a] (2) bonds and yokes, the yoke here is the carved piece of wood attached to the two yokes on the pair of oxen, and connecting them: but it stands for the entire instrument. The bonds are the straps or fastenings of these yokes. (3) send them, this was to be actually done. The nations referred to were those wh. God had given into the hand of the king of Babylon. The ambassadors of these kings had prob. come to Jerus., to make a league for resisting the king of Babylon.[b] (4) their masters, the great kings, *v.* 3.

God and the earth (*vv.* 4, 5).—I. God is the Creator of all earthly things; the earth is not eternal, not the production of chance, not the work of many gods. II. God is the Sovereign Disposer of all earthly things; might have built it and left it uninhabited; might have populated it with other creatures than

a *Nägelsbach, Spk. Com., etc.*
b "The task assigned to Jer. required great faith, as it was sure to provoke alike his own countrymen, and the foreign ambassadors, and their kings, by a seeming insult, at the very time that all were full of confident hopes grounded on the confederacy."—*Fausset.*

those who tenant it now ; He has given what He thinks fit of it to individuals, tribes, and nations.[c]

5—8. (5) given it,[a] Da. iv. 17, 25, 32. God acts in the sovereignty of His will, but infinite wisdom and goodness guide His will. (6) my servant, ch. xxv. 9, xliii. 10. beasts, *etc.*, "the territories of these nations were to become mere hunting grounds for him."[b] (7) son . . son's son, Evil-Merodach was his son, and Belshazzar his grandson.[c] serve . . him, or bring him into servitude. (8) yoke, *see* note on *v.* 2.

The creation.—

I saw when at His word the formless mass,
The world's material world, came to a heap ;
Confusion heard His voice, and wild uproar
Stood ruled, stood vast infinitude confined ;
Till at His second bidding darkness fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung :
Swift to their several quarters hasted then
The cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire ;
And this ethereal quintessence of heaven
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
That roll'd orbicular, and turned to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move ;
Each had his place appointed, each his course ;
The rest in circuit walk this universe.[d]

9—11. (9) diviners, *etc.*, these arts were expressly forbidden to the Jews.[a] enchanters, or soothsayers. (10) to remove you, *i.e.* the certain effect of the delusion will be to remove you. (11) bring . . neek under, *i.e.* yield to the conqueror, and put themselves into subjection to him.

Picture of a witch.—

Through a close lane as I pursued my journey,
And meditating on the last night's vision,
I spied a wrinkled hag, with age grown double,
Picking dry sticks, and mumbling to herself ;
Her eyes with scalding rheum were gall'd and red,
And palsy shook her head ; her hands seemed wither'd ;
And on her crooked shoulder had she wrapp'd
The tatter'd remnant of an old striped hanging,
Which served to keep her carcase from the cold.
So there was nothing of a piece about her.
Her lower weeds were all o'er coarsely patched
With different coloured rags—black, red, white, yellow,
And seem'd to speak variety of wretchedness.
I ask'd her of the way, which she informed me ;
Then craved my charity, and bade me hasten
To save a sister.[b]

12—15. (12) Zedekiah, who was restless under the Babylonian yoke, and, revolting, brought the final ruin on the land. bring . . under, fig. for quietly submitting. (13) die, by stubborn and wilful resistance. (14) a lie, ch. xiv. 14, xxiii. 21, xxix. 8, lyingly. (15) not sent them, so no kind of trust is to be put in their prophecies.

Detection of lying.—The folly of lying consists in its defeating its own purpose. A habit of lying is generally detected in the end ; and after detection the liar, instead of deceiving, will not

c Dr. Thomas.

a "God here, as elsewhere, connects with the symbol doctrine, which is as it were its soul, without which it would be not only cold and frivolous, but even dead." — *Calvin.*
b Spk. Com.
c "The two kings mentioned in Ptolemy's Canon between Evil-Merodach and Belshazzar (or Nabonedus) — viz., Neriglissarus and Laborosoarchodus, had no right by lineal descent : for Neriglissarus was only husband to Evil-Merodach's daughter, and Laborosoarchodus was son to Neriglissarus." —*Lowth.*
d Milton.

a De. xviii. 11 ; Is. ii. 6.
"There is also an affected ignorance, such a one as is contracted by a wilful neglect of the means ; and this is not excusing but condemning. . . . In the midst of light to be in darkness ; for an Israel to have an Egypt in a Goshen ; this is highly provoking, and may justly cause God to lay hold on vengeance."—*Dr. South.*
b Otway.

"To perceive truth by its proper evidence, is of the formal nature of the rational mind ; as it is of the physical nature of the eye to see an object by the light that it reflects, or of the

ear to hear the sounds which the air conveys to it."—*Bp. Horsley.*

a Gilpin.

a 2 Ki. xxiv. 13; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 5—7.
b 2 Ki. xxv. 13—17; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 18.
"Do not as some ungracious pastors do, show me the steep and thorny way to heaven, whilst like a puff'd and reckless libertine, himself the primrose path of dalliance treads, and recks not his own road." — *Shakespeare.*
c Mrs. Jameson.

a 2 Ki. xxv. 13; Je. lii. 17, 20, 21.
The genuineness of these four *vv.* (19—22) is disputed.
b Ezr. i. 7, v. 13, 14.

You needn't have such a reverence for truth as always to stand at an awful distance from it.

even be believed when he happens to speak the truth. Nay, every single lie is attended with such a variety of circumstances which lead to a detection, that it is often discovered. The use generally made of a lie is to cover a fault; but as this end is seldom answered, we only aggravate what we wish to conceal. In point even of prudence, an honest confession would serve us better.[a]

16—18. (16) vessels, *etc.*, these had been carried away in the reigns of Jeconiah, and also of Jehoiakim.[a] (17. 18) go not, *etc.*, Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard under Nebuchadnezzar, carried all away.[b]

Preparation for ministry.—Once on a time, when St. Ildefonso was entering his cathedral at the head of a midnight procession, he perceived the high altar surrounded by a blaze of light. He alone of all the clergy ventured to approach, and found the Virgin herself seated on his ivory episcopal throne, and surrounded by a multitude of angels chanting a solemn service from the Psalter. He bowed to the ground before the heavenly vision; and the Virgin thus addressed him: "Come hither, most faithful servant of God, and receive this robe, which I have brought thee from the treasury of my Son." Then he knelt before her: and she threw over him a chasuble, or cassock, of heavenly tissue, which was adjusted on his shoulders by the attendant angels.[c]

19—22. (19) pillars, *etc.*, 1 Ki. vii. 15, 23, 27.[a] (20—22) then . . restore, after the captivity, when God Himself shall arrange for the return of His people. This was fulfilled in the commission of Cyrus.[b]

Divine faithfulness.—A storekeeper of the Christian Commission was requested to cut the slices of bread thinner, as the supply was running low. He said, "Oh, no! I can't: the poor fellows are so hungry!" "But our bread will soon be gone." "Well, I have faith to believe the Lord will send us more before we are quite out." He did as he liked, feeding the hungry soldiers that pressed about him. The last loaf was taken from the shelf, and hundreds were still unfed, when an immense load of provisions was driven up to the head-quarters of the Commission,—more than enough to supply all their wants. It came more than a hundred miles to Gettysburg, just in time. The Lord does not require thin slices, but a strong faith.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

1—4. (1) beginning, or earlier half. Zedekiah reigned eleven years.[a] of Gibeon, a priestly city, Jos. xxi. 17. (2) broken[b] . . king, by this declaration Hananiah assures the people that they will be relieved of Babylonian dependence and bondage. (3) two full years, *lit.* "two years of days."[c] (4) Jeconiah, whom the people regarded as their rightful king.

The minister's association with Christ.—After preaching over twenty-five years—and among you during the greatest number of those years—in looking back upon my experience, that part of my life which stands out, and which I remember most vividly, is just that part that has had some conscious association with Christ. All the rest is pale and thin, and lies like a cloud on the

a "The Jews often divided any period into two halves, the *beginning* and the *end*. So the fourth year would be in the *beginning* of Zedekiah's reign; and during the first three years the country was in a very disturbed state."—*Fausset.*
b Better render,

horizon. I remember so much of my life in the ministry as has been full of Christ, and almost all the rest I have forgotten. Doctrines, systems, measures, methods—what may be called the necessary mechanical and external part of worship; the more obvious part; the part which the senses would recognise—this seems to have withered and fallen off like the leaves of last summer; but that part which has taken hold of Christ remains, abides.[d]

5—9. (5) said, in answer to this utterly false prophecy. (6) amen, or even so I could heartily wish it might be. (7) nevertheless, *i.e.* spite of all your prophecies and my wishes. I must give you God's message. (8) prophets . . pestilence, Jer. here intimates that he does not stand alone. He only carries on former Divine denunciations. Considering the corruption of the times, prophecies of calamity were much more likely to be given than prophecies of peace.[a] (9) when . . pass, Jer. is satisfied to wait the testing of events.

Lady Huntingdon and Mr. Whitefield.—A Christian minister relates an anecdote, which he heard from Lady Anne Erskine, after he had been preaching in Spafields Chapel, London, on the evening of February 7, 1798, to a large and attentive congregation. It relates to a brother of the Rev. George Whitefield. Mr. Whitefield, it appears, had been in a backsliding state; but, under a sermon preached by his brother in the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel, Bath, it pleased God to arouse him from that state: after which, however, he became melancholy and despairing. He was taking tea with the Countess of Huntingdon, on a service evening, in the chapel-house, and her ladyship endeavoured to raise his desponding hopes by conversing on God's infinite mercy through Jesus Christ; but, for a while, in vain. "My lady," he replied, "I know what you say is true. The mercy of God is infinite: I see it clearly. But, ah! my lady, there is no mercy for me—I am a wretch, entirely lost." "I am glad to hear it, Mr. Whitefield," said Lady Huntingdon. "I am glad at my heart that you are a lost man." He looked with great surprise. "What, my lady, glad! glad at your heart that I am a lost man?" "Yes, Mr. Whitefield, truly glad; for Jesus Christ came into the world to save the lost!" He laid down his cup of tea on the table. "Blessed be God for that," said he. "Glory to God for that word," he exclaimed. "Oh, what unusual power is this which I feel attending it! Jesus Christ came to save the lost! then I have a ray of hope," and so he went on. As he finished his last cup of tea, his hand trembled, and he complained of illness. He went out into the chapel court for the benefit of the air, but staggered to the wall, exclaiming, "I am very ill." A poor old woman, who was going into the chapel, lent him her staff to support him into the house, saying she would call for it when Divine service was over, and inquire after him. But his time was come. Soon after he was brought into the house he expired.

10—14. (10) took . . yoke,[a] ch. xxvii. 2. This was done as a sign that Hananiah regarded Jer.'s predictions as wholly false. He matched Jer.'s symbolic act by an answering symbolical act. (11) all nations, ch. xxvii. 7. went his way, not deigning any reply. (12, 13) shalt make, better, *wilt* make; *i.e.* your conduct in encouraging the people to resist Nebuchadnezzar will

"I have determined to break." c "Hananiah prob. fixed this date by the expectation that the confederacy then on foot would defeat Nebuchadnezzar."—*Spk. Com.*

d Beecher.

a "Hananiah had given no warning as to the need of repentance and conversion, but had foretold prosperity unconditionally."—*Fausset.* One Sabbath afternoon, soon after he had begun his sermon, Mr. Fuller observed several of his congregation asleep. Grieved with their improper conduct, he disturbed them by a smart rap with his hand on the pulpit, and said, "I have often been afraid of preaching you to sleep; but it cannot be my fault to-day, for you are asleep almost before I have begun." "I want to be better acquainted with God's Holy Word; to have its inestimable truths lodged in my memory, its heavenly doctrines impressed upon my heart; that my tempers may take their fashion from it, and my public administrations be enriched by it."—*Hervey.*

a "Hananiah resorts to violence, tears the yoke fr. the Prophet's neck, and breaks it, prob. to the great delight of the multitude, who saw in this

spirited act a symbol of deliverance."—*Spk. Com.*

b Je. xxvii. 6, 7.

St. Philip de Neri followed the anticipations of a young law student through all the stages of his expected triumphs with the question, "And then?" It came in at every point; and, last of all, with his imagined victories won, the impressive question was, "And then?" The student felt its force, and was led to give up the law for the ministry.

c E. Davies.

v. 16. *W. May*, 1; *S. Davies*, ii. 139; *J. Riddock*, iii. 33; *W. T. Young*, ii. 234; *S. Lavington*, ii. 285; *T. Dwight*, ii. 244.

a Dr. Talmage.

"He that finds Truth, without loving her, is like a bat; wh., though it have eyes to discern that there is a sun, yet hath so evil eyes that it cannot delight in the sun."—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

You may know real Christians, as you know anything else; causes by their effects.

b Pres. Davies.

only result in making their captivity the more bitter. (14) yoke of iron, impossible to break, and heavy to bear.*b*

Ignorance of the future.—None, indeed, can open the "seven-sealed book," or look forward over the dim and shadowy field stretching out illimitably before him. The astronomer discourses on the rate at which a sunbeam travels, and explains how the flashing lightning may be dispersed, and its terrible swoop evaded. He even indicates those spheres where storms never gather, and thunders never roll; but he cannot solve the anxious problems of our future, nor help us by his great wisdom to avoid its manifold evils, because they come unforewarned. Nor will the lives of those gone before avail us, seeing no two lives are marked by the same vicissitudes, or chequered by the same light and shades, the same joy and sorrow. In the eloquent words of a foreign divine, "We can become familiar with a landscape; we know where to find the waterfall, and the shady ledge where the violets grow in spring, and the sassafras gives forth its odours; but we can never become familiar with our life-landscape; we can never tell where we shall come upon the shady dell, or where the fountains will gush, and the birds sing. That is with God." And His name be praised that it is so! for a definite prescience thereof would, in most instances, cloud the whole course of life, poison every stream of enjoyment, and render existence a curse of no ordinary magnitude.*c*

15—17. (15) not sent thee, Jer. had courage to make this distinct charge when he had received the new message from God. (16) this year, Hananiah actually died two months after uttering his false prophecy. taught rebellion, De. xiii. 5. (17) seventh month, *comp.* fifth month of *v.* 1. This fulfilment of Jer.'s word must have greatly strengthened his authority as God's Prophet.

A startling announcement (*v.* 16).—These words proved true in the case of Hananiah. The first Sunday in the year a time for earnest thought. I. Those who are over thirty years of age have gone beyond the average of human life. II. The character of our occupations adds to the probability. III. Rapid climatic changes threaten our lives.*a*—*The great possibility of the new year.*—I. Life is the greatest uncertainty in the world. 1. Thousands have died since the last New-Year's day; 2. Thousands of others will die before the next; 3. Youth no preventive; 4. Health no safeguard; 5. You may have to leave your schemes unfinished; 6. Your education may be only begun: 7. You may be unprepared: 8. You may delay preparation; 9. You may be unwilling to think about it. II. You may have strong hopes of the contrary. Should you die this year—1. You will be for ever cut off from all the pleasures of life; 2. All your hopes will be disappointed; 3. You will be deprived for ever of the means of salvation.*b*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

1—7. (1) residue of the elders, those of them who were still alive. (2) after that, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxiv. 12. etc. queen, or queen-mother. (3) Zedekiah sent, the object of this embassy is not indicated. (4) all . . captives, the letter was

a "It would have degraded their whole moral nature to have lived as conspirators,

written soon after they were carried away, and was intended to console them. (5) build, *etc.*, *i.e.* settle quietly down, for the captivity will certainly be prolonged. (6) increased there, in numbers and wealth. (7) seek the peace, or be peaceable citizens in the land of sojourn, duly obeying the laws.[a]

Raymond the traveller. — Raymond, a celebrated European traveller, speaking of the Spanish smugglers, says: "These smugglers are as adroit as they are determined, are familiarised at all times with peril, and much in the very face of death. Their first movement is a never-failing shot, and certainly would be an object of dread to most passengers; for where are they to be dreaded more than in deserts, where crime has nothing to witness it, and the feeble no assistance? As for myself, alone and unarmed, I have met them without anxiety, and have accompanied them without fear. We have little to apprehend from men whom we inspire with no distrust or envy, and everything to expect in those from whom we claim only what is due from man to man. The laws of nature still exist for those who have long shaken off the laws of civil government. At war with society, they are sometimes at peace with their fellows. The assassin has been my guide in the defiles of the boundaries of Italy; the smuggler of the Pyrenees has received me with a welcome in his secret paths. Armed, I should have been the enemy of both; unarmed they have alike respected me. In such expectation, I have long since laid aside all menacing apparatus whatever."[b]

banded together against the country that was for the time their home, and cherishing feelings of hatred towards those with whom they were every day brought into contact."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 7. *A. Fuller*, 576.

"All true opinions are living, and show their life by being capable of nourishment; therefore of change. But their change is that of a tree, not of a cloud."—*Ruskin.*

b Cheever.

8—11. (8) diviners, *etc.*, ch. xiv. 14. (9) falsely, or in a lie. (10) after seventy years, ch. xxv. 11, 12. (11) peace, or good will. expected end, or, "a future and a hope." "An end, and that such an end as you wish for."

Divine purposes fulfilled in answer to prayer (*vv.* 8—13).—I. A certain danger declared. II. A blessed deliverance promised. 1. The grounds on which it rested: 2. The time of their return expressly declared: 3. In their restoration the Divine faithfulness would be strikingly manifested; 4. The procuring cause of their deliverance was the boundless compassion of God. III. An important duty enjoined. 1. It is Divinely ordained; 2. The greatest encouragement is afforded for its observance; 3. To be successful it must be attended to in no formal manner.

"What is truth?" was once asked of a deaf and dumb boy. He moved his finger in a straight line. "What is falsehood?" He made a zigzag motion with his finger. Truth is the straight line, falsehood is the crooked way.

12—14. (12) call upon me, Da. ix. 3. (13) seek, *etc.*, Le. xxvi. 39, 40; De. xxx. 1; Ps. xxxii. 6. (14) be found, *etc.*, comp. De. iv. 29, 30, xxx. 1—5.

Heart searchings (*v.* 13).—I. Man, through all ages of time, has been influenced by a principle of reform, so all spiritual progress must be the outcome of diligent searching. II. This searching is the child of necessity. III. The searching to be successful must be thorough. Apply:—1. The ultimate and inevitable object of search; 2. The certainty of success assured, dependent only upon one condition named, earnestness; 3. Searching is not always strenuous exertion, study the might of systematic inaction; 4. Note the individual reference of the text.

Address to elder scholars.—You are feeling much your need of salvation, but you do not feel it more, or indeed so much, as you really need it. (We should try to keep up, and deepen earnest

vv. 12, 13. *J. Slade*, v. 19.

a T. H. B., in *Analyst.*

"The truth is infinite as the firmament above you. In childhood both seem near and measurable: but with years they grow and grow; and seem further off, and further, and grander, and deeper, and vaster, as God Himself; till you

smile to remember how you thought you could touch the sky, and blush to recollect the proud and self-sufficient way in which you used to talk of knowing or preaching 'The Truth.'"—*F. W. Robertson.*

No Christian man, through the operation of grace, loses his identity; he still retains some peculiarities of his former character. We may trace in Paul the Apostle the lineaments of Saul the persecutor.

b Hire.

"To play with important truths, to disturb the repose of established tenets, to subtilise objections, and elude proof, is too often the sport of youthful vanity, of which maturer experience commonly repents. There is a time when every man is weary of raising difficulties only to task himself with their solution, and desires to enjoy truth without the labour or hazard of contest."—*Dr. Samuel Johnson.*

a Cheever.

a "Burning alive was a mode of punishment customary among the Chaldæans."—*Henderson.*

b Is. xxxii. 6.

Believers are God's workmanship; injury may be done by comforting too soon.) God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are much more anxious about your salvation than you are. (See Jer. xxix. 11.) Illustrating the Divine anxiety for salvation of men: the Father devises the plan—the Son executes it at cost of humiliation, sacrifice, and death—the Holy Ghost has been striving with you a long time, until almost grieved and quenched. Do you say, But why make this condition, "When ye shall search for Me with all your heart"? Surely if you are really in earnest you would not wish to bring to God half a heart. This is the real difficulty: we are so unwilling to seek God wholly, to give all for Christ, to yield unto Him body, soul, and spirit. To help you in getting your whole soul united in seeking God, ponder these considerations. 1. The priceless value of the soul; 2. The shortness and uncertainty of life; 3. The sadness and bitterness of sin; 4. Your utter helplessness in saving yourself; 5. The full and sufficient salvation provided in Jesus Christ. If your heart is wholly set upon the search for God, it will be manifested by such things as these:—(1) The immediate and resolute giving up of all sin; (2) The earnestness of your own personal decision for Christ; (3) The importunity with which you carry your cry for mercy and salvation to the throne of the heavenly grace. Let then your whole heart seek.[b]

15—19. (15) **ye have said,** these denunciations are addressed to the false prophets. (16) **king that sitteth,** Zedekiah, who was not the actual king while Jeconiah lived. (17) **vile figs,** ch. xxiv. 8. (18) **persecute them,** ch. xxiv. 9, also xix. 8, xxv. 18. (19) **because,** *etc.*, ch. xxv. 4, xxxii. 33.

Rescuing a drowning boy.—The Rev. Mr. Kelly, of the town of Ayr, once preached an excellent sermon from the parable of the man who fell among thieves. He was particularly severe on the conduct of the priest, who saw him, and ministered not unto him, but passed by on the other side; and, in an animated and pathetic flow of eloquence, he exclaimed, "What! not even the servant of the Almighty! he whose tongue was engaged in the work of charity, whose bosom was appointed the seat of brotherly love, whose heart the emblem of pity; did he refuse to stretch forth his hand, and to take the mantle from his shoulders to cover the nakedness of woe? If he refused, if the shepherd himself went astray, was it to be wondered at that the flock followed?" Such were the precepts of the preacher, and he practised what he preached. The next day, when the river was much increased, a boy was swept overboard from a small boat by the force of the current. A great concourse of people were assembled, but none of them attempted to save the boy; when Mr. Kelly threw himself from his chamber window into the current, and at the hazard of his own life saved that of the boy.[a]

20—23. (20, 21) **Ahab . . Zedekiah,** false prophets, not otherwise known. (22) **roasted,** *comp.* Da. iii. 6.[a] (23) **villany,** folly, or lewdness.[b]

Hypocrites seeking their own advantage.—God is in the hypocrite's mouth, but the world is in his heart, which he expects to gain through his good reputation. I have read of one that offered his prince a great sum of money to have leave once or twice a day to come into his presence, and only say, "God save

your Majesty!" The prince, wondering at this large offer for so small a favour, asked him, "What advantage would this afford him?" "O sire," saith he, "this, though I have nothing else at your hands, will get me a name in the country for one who is a great favourite at court, and such an opinion will help me to more at the year's end than it costs me for the purchase." Thus some, by the name they get for great saints, advance their worldly interests, which lie at the bottom of all their profession.[c]

24—29. (24) **to Shemaiah**, a false prophet. **Nehelamite**, or from the village of Nehlem.[a] Shemaiah is only known through this passage. (25) **letters**, prob. one to the people, and a separate and private one to the priest. (26) **officers**, Heb. *pâkids;* having the overcharge of the Temple. Overseers to keep order. **mad**, *etc.*, intimating that Jeremiah was in such a state. (27) **reproved**, exerted your authority in silencing. (28) **is long**, this was the brunt of Jer.'s offending. The false prophets declared there would be a speedy return. Jer. said No, not for many long years. (29) **read this letter**, whether in a kindly spirit, or to annoy the Prophet, does not appear.

Guards against deceit.—

For the dull world most homage pays to those
Who on their understanding most impose.
First man creates, and then he fears th' elf;
Thus others cheat him not, but he himself.
He hates realities, and hugs the cheat,
And still the only pleasure's the deceit.
So meteors flatter with a dazzling dye,
Which no existence has but in the eye.
At distance, prospects please us, but when **near**,
We find but desert rocks and fleeting air;
From stratagem to stratagem we run,
And he knows most, who latest is undone;
An honest man will take a knave's advice,
But idiots only will be cozen'd twice;
Once warned is well bewared.[b]

30—32. (30, 31) **trust . . lie**, in an utterly false representation. (32) **man . . people**, none of his posterity should be spared to return to their own land again.[a] **taught rebellion**, ch. xxviii. 16.

Hypocrite.—

Devoured the widow's house and orphan's bread;
In holy phrase, transacted villanies
That common sinners durst not meddle with.
At sacred feasts he sat among the saints,
And with his guilty hands touched holiest things:
And none of sin lamented more, or sighed
More deeply, or with grave countenance,
Or longer prayer, wept o'er the dying man,
Whose infant children, at the moment he
Planned how to rob. In sermon style he bought,
And sold, and lived; and salutations made
In Scripture terms. He prayed by quantity;
And with his repetitions long and loud,
All knees were weary. With one hand he **put**
A penny in the urn of poverty,

ship; and the end of all His works is to form one vast mirror in which to reflect His own image.

c Gurnall.

a "The site of this village is unknown. This was addressed to Shemaiah after the messengers who delivered the former message to the captives in Babylon were returned home, and they brought the letter of Shemaiah mentioned in the following verse."—*Lowth.* "In the E. madness is regarded as something divine, and many of the symbolical actions of the Prophets, such as that of Jeremiah going about with a yoke on his neck, would be mocked at by the irreverent as passing the line between prophecy and madness."—*Spk. Com. v.* 26. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 630.

b Dryden.

a "As he despised the lawful time, and wished to return before the time God had expressly announced, in just retribution he should not share in the restoration from Babylon at all."—*Fausset.*

"It is not wrangling disputes and syllogistical reasonings that are the mighty pillars which underprop truth in the world: if we would but underset it with the holiness of our hearts and lives, it should

never fail. Truth is a prevailing and conquering thing, and would quickly overcome the world, did not the earthiness of our dispositions and the darkness of our false hearts hinder it." — *Cudworth.*

You are sure to do all things spiritually, if you live in the spirit of sonship.

And with the other took a shilling out—
On charitable lists,—those trumps which told
The public ear who had in secret done
The poor a benefit, and half the alms
They told of, took themselves to keep them sounding.
He blazed his name, more pleased to have it there
Than in the book of life. Seest thou the man!
A serpent with an angel's voice! a grave
With flowers bestrewed! and yet few were deceived.
His virtues being overdone, his face
Too grave, his prayers too long, his charities
Too pompously attended, and his speech
Larded too frequently, and out of time,
With serious phraseology—were rents
That in his garments opened in spite of him,
Through which the well-accustomed eye could see
The rottenness of his heart.[b]

b Pollok.

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

1—3. (1) **word**, *etc.*, different in tone to the preceding "words."[a] This prophecy chiefly concerns the restoration of the exiles. (2) **in a book**, so that they might be carried to the captives, and might be preserved safely until the time of their fulfilment. (3) **Israel and Judah**, note that *both* sections of the people of Israel are included in the promises of restoration.[b] In ch. xxxi. distinct messages are given, first to the ten tribes, then to Judah.

The effect of mercy.—A soldier in the —th regiment of our army, a fine, gallant fellow, heard of the severe sickness of his wife. He applied for leave of absence, but was refused. The officers of his regiment then made a new application in his behalf, which was again refused. He left the army; but before he got away, was retaken and brought in as a deserter. He was tried, found guilty, and summoned before the commanding officer to receive his sentence. He entered the tent—a fine, tall, soldierly-looking man—saluted, and stood perfectly unmoved, while the officer read his fearful doom—"To be shot to death with musketry on the next Friday." Not a muscle of his face twitched, not a limb quivered. "I deserve it, sir," he replied, respectfully; "I deserted from my flag. Is that all, sir?" "No," replied the officer; "I have something else for you;" and taking another paper, he read aloud the doomed man's pardon. The undaunted spirit, whom severity had failed to move, was completely broken down by clemency. He dropped to the ground shaking, sobbing, and overcome; and being restored to his regiment, proved himself grateful for the mercy shown him, and was soon promoted for good conduct. There are many who say, "We are not going to be frightened into religion," and who profess to be too brave to fear God's wrath. But will you withstand the proffers of His grace? If you shrink not from the curse of the law, will you not hear the tender entreaty of the Cross? Ah! if, like the deserter, you really heard the sentence ringing in your ears; if, like him, you really felt that you deserved it: if you knew that the execution of it was near at hand, like him you would be

a "The joyful transition is marked by a sudden change from grave and mournful accents in solemn prose, to a jubilant outburst of poetic ecstasy."—*Wordsworth.*

b Je. iii. 18; Eze. xxxvii. 6, 21, 22; Ho. i. 11.

"We may possess earthly comforts; but we must not be possessed by them: we may use them as flowers to smell, but not as garlands to crown ourselves with: we may as pilgrims walk with them, as staves in our hands, seeking the country which is above; but we may not load ourselves with them, or bear them as burdens upon our backs: we may make them our encouragement, but not our confidence: we may use them as accessories; but we may not love them as our

broken down by the voice of Jesus saying, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" gladly would you welcome the gracious pardon. Shut not your ears to that compassionate voice. Throw yourself at Jesus' feet, take the forgiveness He freely offers, and let your life henceforth show that His grace has not been bestowed in vain.[c]

4—9. (4, 5) voice of trembling, "depicting the state of terror into which the Jews were thrown on the approach of the Medo-Persian army to the attack on Babylon."[a] They feared the approach of Cyrus, who nevertheless was to be their deliverer. (6) a man, or a male. The men seemed as full of trouble as women in the time of childbirth.[b] paleness, one sign of fright. (7) that day, the day when Babylon is captured. (8) break his yoke, *i.e.* the yoke of Babylon. serve themselves, exact forced labour: hold in bondage. (9) David their king, or the Sprout of David.[c]

Trust in the mercy of God (*Wilkinson's dying confession*).—When the venerable Mr. Wilkinson had nearly reached the close of his life, he said to a relative who came to visit him, and who attempted to cheer him by referring to his Christian character, "Ah, you cannot see my heart. It has always been my endeavour not only to abstain from evil, but from all appearance of evil; but I would be jealous of my own heart. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Well, I must do as I have done ten thousand times before under such feelings, cast myself entirely on the mercy of God: 'God be merciful to me a sinner'—the vilest of sinners; and after all I have received, a most ungrateful sinner! I shall never get beyond that prayer."

10—13. (10) fear . . not, *comp.* Is. xli. 13, xliii. 5, xliv. 1. from afar, even "from the most distant provinces of the Chaldæan empire." in rest, having external peace and internal quietness and order. (11) full end, ch. iv. 27, v. 18. correct . . measure, ch. x. 23, 24. (12) bruise, *etc.*, ch. xvii. 9. Only to be cured by such extreme afflictions and chastisements. wound is grievous, ch. x. 19, xiv. 17, xv. 18. (13) bound up, or for the pressing together of thy wound. None can help or heal.[a]

God's gracious designs towards His chosen people (*vv.* 10, 11).—Observe then—I. That God has glorious things in reserve for His chosen people. 1. For the Jewish people: 2. For His people afar off among the nations. II. That even His darkest dispensations towards them are intended for their good. 1. This was, and still is, the case with respect to the Jews; 2. And may we not see the hand of God ordering and overruling everything for our good? III. That His presence with them is their never-failing security. Exhort—(1) Those who are afar off; (2) Those who are visited with any great affliction; (3) Those who are under discouragement of any kind.[b]

14—17. (14) lovers, *i.e.* the nations which formerly sought the alliance of Judah, esp. Assyria and Egypt. seek thee not, to show any concern for thy distress. of a cruel one, *i.e.* with a severity which looks like cruelty.[a] (15) criest thou, pleading as if I had dealt unjustly with thee: ch. xv. 18.[b] sorrow, or bodily pain. (16) therefore, or surely. be devoured, God

principal happiness."—*Spurstowe.*

c American Messenger.

a Henderson.

b Je. iv. 31, vi. 24; Nah. ii. 10.

c Je. xxiii. 5, 6.

The fullest reference of this term must be to Messiah, in whom all the promises made to David were to be fulfilled.

Is. lv. 3, 4; Eze. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 24; Ho. iii. 5.

v. 7. W. Strong, 164.

A man is estimated, in God's book, at what his love is to Christ, and no more.

a "So desperate were the circumstances of the Jews in Babylon, while enduring the punishment God had inflicted upon them for their crimes, that no human interposition which they could rationally expect, could avail for their deliverance."—*Henderson.*

It is a good sign when you love those most in whom you see most of Christ.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

a "God condescends to employ languageadapted to human conceptions."—*Fausset.*

would raise up Cyrus against them, and so secure the deliverance of His people. (17) restore health, since even the incurable God can cure. outcast, or "one put away and rejected."

The Restorer of mankind (*r.* 17).—How deep are the wants which our faith supplies, and how wide is the feeling of the beauty and the power of the remedy. 1. Faith in the Christian sacrifice and its attendant revelation of the Divine character alone answer the demands of the heart and reason of man for a higher state of moral perfection; 2. Christianity offers to maintain a communication between this world and that eternal world of holiness and truth; 3. Faith confirms and directs that principle of hope which even in our daily life we are perpetually forced to substitute for happiness; 4. But above all its recommendations to the wants and solicitudes of man, the Gospel commends itself by the adorable object which it presents to our affection.[c]

18—22. (18) Jacob's tent, ch. iv. 20. The term "tent" is perhaps used to indicate the temporary character of their dwellings in Chaldæa. own heap, or "little hill." Heb. *tel*. Referring to Mount Zion.[a] palace .. remain, or "each palace shall be inhabited suitably. (19) thanksgiving, such would be becoming to the restored and redeemed people. not small, or not lightly esteemed. (20) aforetime, as in the prosperous days of David. (21) of themselves, the governors shall be natives, not foreigners. Reference is to Zerubbabel, a prince of the house of David. draw near, as a specially favoured one.[b] engaged his heart, the sign of sincerity and earnestness. (22) my people, ch. xxiv. 7.

Encouragement to seek after God (*r.* 21).—From this passage I shall call your attention to the following propositions:—1. That it is man's grand privilege that he can approach unto God; 2. That he has from Scripture a special warrant to draw near to God; 3. That God engages for the success of that man who thus seeks to approach unto Him.[c]

Egyptian bricks.—The bricks anciently used by the Egyptians in the erection of their cities and dwellings were made of clay, bound together with chopped straw, and baked in the sun. Such were the bricks which the Israelites were employed in making. Their composition was necessarily perishable, and explains why it is that no remains of the ancient cities of Egypt are to be found. They would, indeed, last longer in the dry climate of that country than in any other; but even there they must gradually decay and crumble to dust, and the cities so constructed become heaps. Of precisely the same materials are the villages of Egypt built at this day. "Village after village," says the Rev. Mr. Jowett, speaking of Tentyra, "built of unburnt brick, crumbling into ruins, and giving place to new habitations, have raised the earth in some parts nearly to the level of the summit of the temple. In every part of Egypt we find the towns built in this manner, upon the ruins, or rather the rubbish, of the former habitations. The expression in Jer. xxx. 18 literally applies to Egypt, in the meanest sense: and the expression in Job xv. 28 might be illustrated by many of these deserted hovels: 'He dwelleth in desolate cities, and in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps.'"

b "The fault is in thyself, not in Me; and the remedy is in thine own hands. Turn to Me by repentance, and thou shalt be healed." —*Wordsworth.*

v. 17. *W. A. Butler*, ii. 133; *Bp. Armstrong*, 249.

c Archer Butler, M.A.

a "Generally there was a castle or citadel in the middle of the ancient cities, upon a rising ground, for the greater strength and security of the place."—*Lowth.*

b "It is not only foretold that a native governor should be set over the house of Israel, but that he should be distinguished for his piety."—*Rob. Hall.*

v. 21. *R. Erskine*, ii. 358; *R. Hall*, v. 277; *J. Alting*, *Op.* ii. 4, 128.

c R. Cecil, M.A.

"Truth is a mirror which reflects objects that pass before it, without addition, diminution, or alteration in any sense or degree whatsoever. It is a pure, crystal stream, which shows in her depths the exact image of things as they may stand on her banks."—*John Bate.*

23, 24. (23) whirlwind, *etc.*, 2 Ki. ii. 1; *comp.* Je. xxiii. 19, 20. continuing, or a cutting. (24) latter days, first referring to the restoration times and then to the times of Messiah.

God's messengers.—

God sent His singers upon earth
With songs of sadness and of mirth,
That they might touch the hearts of men,
And bring them back to heaven again.

The first, a youth, with soul of fire,
Held in his hand a golden lyre;
Through groves he wandered, and by streams,
Playing the music of our dreams.

The second, with a bearded face,
Stood singing in the market-place,
And stirred with accents deep and loud
The hearts of all the listening crowd.

A grey old man, the third and last,
Sang in cathedrals dim and vast,
While the majestic organ rolled
Contrition from its mouths of gold.

And those who heard the singers three
Disputed which the best might be;
For still their music seemed to start
Discordant echoes in each heart.

But the Great Master said,—"I see
No best in kind but in degree;
I give a various gift to each,
To charm, to strengthen, and to teach.

These are the three great chords of night,
And he whose ear is tuned aright,
Will hear no discord in the three,
But the most perfect harmony."[a]

"We should echo in our thankfulness the first intimation that God gives in His providence of an approaching mercy. If you do but hear when the king is on his road towards your town, you raise your bells to ring him in, and stay not till he be entered the gates. The birds they rise betimes in the morning, and are saluting the rising sun with their sweet notes in the air. Thus should we strike up our harps in praising God at the first appearance of a mercy."—*Gurnall.*

"The grand, and indeed the only, character of truth, is its capability of enduring the test of universal experience, and coming unchanged out of every possible form of fair discussion."—*Sir John Herschel.*

a Longfellow.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

1—5. (1) same time, *i.e.* in the latter days mentioned ch. xxx. 24. be the God, be *manifestly* their God through My intervention on their behalf: ch. xxx. 22. (2) left of the sword, referring either to the ancient deliverance from Egypt, or figuratively to the restoration from Babylon.[a] went . . rest, or planned to guide him to the rest of Canaan. (3) of old, marg. *from afar*,[b] or in the olden time. everlasting love, so as truly covering and blessing thee now as then. drawn thee, from this last captivity.[c] (4) tabrets, alluding to Ex. xv. 20. (5) common, or abundant things. The mountains of Samaria are those of Israel.

The attractive force of Divine love (*v.* 3).—I. Divine love—1. In its object; 2. In its measure; 3. In its duration. II. Divine attraction—1. In its nature; 2. In its means. Apply:—(1) Let saints rejoice in the Divine love; (2) Let sinners yield to the Divine attraction.[d]

Eastern dances.—Speaking of the Greek dances, and particu-

a "The Babylonish captivity may fitly be spoken of figuratively as a *wilderness state.*"—*Henderson.*

b "Israel gratefully acknowledges in reply God's *past* grace; but at the same time tacitly implies by the expression *of old*, that God does not appear to her *now.*"—*Fausset.*

c "Or, 'Therefore I draw out, I

prolong, or extend, perpetual long-suffering and love toward thee." — *Wordsworth.*

d G. Brooks.

e Shaw.

a "The schism of Jeroboam shall be healed in the captivity. The envy of Ephraim and Judah shall cease in those happy times."—*Wordsworth.*

b De. xxvi. 19.

c "The house of Joseph is thus to be restored to its old pre-eminence."-*Spk.Com.*

d C. Simeon, M.A.

Nature is true to itself, and so is grace; the ox is not better known by its lowing, nor a lion by its roar, than a Christian by his holy life.

e R. T. S.

a "The Jews call all countries islands wh. they go to by sea."—*Lowth.*

b "In Jerusalem they would be occupied with religious duties, but after these are rendered to God, they are to disperse each to his own fields."—*Spk. Com.*

c 1 Sa. ii. 28.

a Mat. ii. 18.

b "By a beautiful figure, Rachel, the mother of the Ephraimites, who was buried at this place, is personified, and represented as risen from her grave, and bitterly lamenting

larly of that called the crane. Dr. Chandler says: "The peasants perform it yearly in the streets of the Greek convent, at the conclusion of the vintage, joining hands, and preceding their mules and their asses, which are laden with grapes in panniers, in a very curved and intricate manner, the leader waving a handkerchief, which has been imagined to denote the clue given by Ariadne."[e]

6—9. (6) **watchmen**, "these were placed on heights at the time of the new moon to give first notice of its appearance." **up to Zion**, both sections of the nation, Israel and Judah, uniting in the sacred festivals.[a] (7) **among**, or because of the restoration of Israel, regarded as the chief of the nations.[b] (8) **north country**, the Chaldæan districts to which Israel had been carried: ch. iii. 12. 18. **coasts**, ch. xxv. 32. **thither**, to Palestine. (9) **weeping**, that of gladness, not of sorrow. **supplications**, indicating a right spirit of dependence on God. **walk . . rivers**, indicating full supply during their desert journey. **Ephraim . . firstborn**, 1 Chro. v. 1, 2.[c]

Christian pilgrims (*vv.* 8, 9).—I. Their character. The text implies—1. That there is no discouragement which God will not enable us to surmount; 2. That God has chosen those who are in the most discouraging circumstances on purpose that His own power may be the more displayed and glorified. II. Their journey is here described—1. In its commencement: 2. In its progress. Address—(1) Those who yet are in a state of bondage; 2. Those who are travelling towards Zion.[d]

Archbishop Leighton.—In 1648, it was a question asked of the brethren, at the meetings of ministers twice in the year, "If they preached the duties of the times?" And when it was found that Leighton did not, he was reproved for this omission; but he replied, "If all the brethren have preached on the times, may not one poor brother be suffered to preach on eternity?"[e]

10—14. (10) **nations**, the pagan nations. **isles**, as before, the coast-lands of the Mediterranean.[a] (11) **was stronger**, while God withheld from Israel His defence and help. (12) **flow**, like a river from Zion for the cultivation and refreshing of the land.[b] **watered garden**, fresh and growing, Is. lviii. 11. (13) **to joy**, at being settled in their own land and under God's blessings. (14) **satiate**, *i.e.* fully satisfy. **fatness**, through the great abundance of the thank-offerings.[c]

God's goodness satisfying (*v.* 14).—I. The objects of His Divine complacency.—"My people." II. The measure of their joy.—"shall be satisfied." III. The source of their delight,—"My goodness."

15—17. (15) **voice . . Ramah**,[a] "This is a poetical figure, representing in a dramatic form the miserable condition of the kingdom of Ephraim devastated by the sword of the Assyrians. Ramah is in Benjamin, two hours' journey from Jerusalem.[b] **Rachel**, as mother of Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, she stands as mother of the ten tribes.[c] (16) **rewarded**, the reward of mothers is for their children to grow up, and dwell in the land. (17) **in thine end**, ch. xxix. 11. For thy posterity.

The Christian's hope in the death of infants (*vv.* 15, 16).—I. Rachel's sorrow, death of infants, affecting, common, few families in which there is not the memory of a lost child. II.

Rachel's consolation. Apply—1. To the young; 2. To parents; 3. Let all remember that none but little children enter into the kingdom of heaven.[d]—*The captive Jews.*—Briefly allude to circumstances under which the words of text were spoken: while Ezekiel was prophesying to captive Israel in Chaldæa, Jeremiah was prophesying in Israel; the former preparing the captives for their return, the latter encouraging the remnant to expect that event. Consider—I. The place they had left. The promised land. For their sins God had permitted their captivity. You are now surrounded by good influences. If thoughtless, God may permit the loss to you of much that is good. Those who see this will grieve. II. The place they had gone to. Chaldæa, land of idolatry. Left home, friends, liberty; and worst of all, means of grace, comfort, instruction. You may wander to the far country (prodigal), and sigh for lost good. III. The hope of their return. By whom entertained. Old friends, teachers, etc. How brought about. Spirit of God awakening desire. Memory recalling the past. Providence preparing the way. Mercy calling. Learn:—1. Beware of indifference; 2. Look after old scholars who have wandered; 3. In love invite them back; 4. Pray for their conversion.[e]

Historical types of future events.—It is worthy of note that in the New Testament some words are quoted from the Prophets which contain no prediction at all, and are yet spoken of as being fulfilled, because the event to which they allude was a type of that to which they are applied. Our Lord, and after Him the Apostles, laid down the principle that past history may represent that which is to happen hereafter. Thus the Saviour refers to the brazen serpent, and to Jonah as prefiguring His resurrection, and even the time of it on the third day. If Paul teaches that Hagar and Ishmael are typical of the covenants; the paschal lamb of Christ's atoning death; the passage of the Red Sea of baptism; the smitten rock of Christ; the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Peter in his allusion to the deluge, and St. John in his mystical application of the names Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon, confirm the principle which helps us to interpret passages of the Old Testament, such as those where the Messiah is called David, and to understand passages of the New Testament where what was spoken of David is applied to our Lord. The principle also solves the apparent difficulty of the two passages cited above,—a difficulty strongly insisted upon by the enemies of Christianity. In neither case does St. Matthew quote predictions, but Hosea's and Jeremiah's references to past history. When Hosea said, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son," or when Jeremiah spoke of Rachel weeping for her children, neither was uttering a prediction of the future, but alluding to facts long past. Hosea was alluding to the Exodus eight centuries before, and Jeremiah to the carrying away of the ten tribes one hundred years before he wrote. St. Matthew, therefore, speaks of them as being fulfilled in the only way in which facts can be fulfilled, in events the antitypes of those referred to.[f]

Rachel weeping for her children.—

Rachel for her children wailing,
With a woe how unavailing
Aught to soothe—and comfort failing
To assuage her moans,

the absence of her descendants, who had all been carried into exile."—*Henderson.*

c "The immediate reference of the allusion is to the assemblage at Ramah of Benjamin, by the captain of the Chaldæan guard, of the unfortunate captives whom he was carrying away from their country to Babylon."—*Dr. W. H. Mill.*

v. 15. *Dr. S. Chartres*, ii. 417; *Dr. S. Glasse*, 67; *S. Lavington*, ii. 107; *Bp. Horne*, i. 287; *C. J. Hoare*, 95.

d J. H. Stewart, M.A.

e Hive.

Rachel, the ancestral mother of the Israelites, was buried near Ramah, on the way to Bethlehem. The figure of speech by which she is made to typify or impersonate the weeping mothers who, at Bethlehem, mourned over their lost ones, refusing to be comforted, is peculiarly touching and beautiful. The mother's love in every age and clime is the same, and the grief of a mother over her dead is, of all sorrow, the most helpless and unconsolable. But even this has its balm. Could those stricken mothers have known that Jesus lived, that in the heartless slaughter of their little ones the Saviour of the world had been spared, to

fulfil His mission of Redeemer, they might have smiled even amid their tears.

"The voice of weeping. — The air is full of farewells to the dying, and mournings for the dead; the heart of Rachel, for her children crying, will not be comforted."—*Longfellow.*

f A. McCaul.

"When we would convince men of an error by the strength of truth, let us withal pour the sweet balm of love upon their heads. Truth and love are two of the most powerful things in the world; and when they both go together they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of truth and the silken cords of love twisted together will draw men on with a secret violence, whether they will or no."—*Cudworth.*

a "Ephraim acknowledged that he had been chastised rightly, and for his good, bec., like an untrained steer, he had resisted Jehovah's will."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Chastisements are effects of displeasure, but not of a displeasure intended for the destruction of its object, but the amendment."—*Rob. Hall.*

The Jewish mother, Ramah's daughter,
When her babes were given to slaughter,
Saw their pure young blood, like water,
Poured upon the stones.

'Midst her martyred infants kneeling,
High the wail of anguished feeling,
Mother's love and woe revealing,
Thrilled upon the air;
Then were seen bright angels bending
O'er the slain,—white wings extending
To waft the spirits heavenward tending,—
She has found them there.

But, ah! the children of my sorrow,
Night is theirs—no hopeful morrow;
Alas! worn heart, where wilt thou borrow
Words thy grief to show?
Oh, my sons! ere sin beguiling
Plunged you into depths defiling
Of intemperance—treacherous smiling—
Gulf of sin and woe!

Ye were innocent and loving.
Mother's deepest yearnings moving;
Her soft arms and bosom proving
Shelter still, and rest.
Babes of Bethlehem, loved and cherished,
Would my babes like you had perished!
Reft while sinless, spotless, cherished,
From the mother's breast.

They were spared, were fostered, nourished,
Plants of hope, they bloomed and flourished,
Yet they withered, fell, and perished
In their summer prime.
Lost, oh, lost!—Say not for ever,
One there is who can deliver—
Seek and save the lost—dissever
Youth from guilt and crime.

18—21. (18) **bemoaning**, in a penitent and humble frame of mind. **bullock**, *etc.*, lit. like an untaught calf. Ho. x. 11.[a] (19) **turned**, by God's dispensations of chastisement. **instructed**, or brought to my senses by my suffering.[b] **smote . . thigh**, the natural expression of one who is suddenly struck with a thought, or a conviction. **reproach . . youth**, burden of the memory of youthful sins.[c] (20) **against him**, in the purpose to chastise him. (21) **waymarks**, to mark the way back to Palestine.

The true penitent (*vv.* 18, 19).—We have here—I. The picture of a true penitent. 1. His position is solitary; 2. His language that of self-reproach; 3. He refers his state entirely to God; 4. He at length ventures on the filial relationship. II. The process of his restoration. 1. It was by affliction; 2. Instruction; 3. Conviction; 4. Humiliation. Apply:—(1) Consider afflictions as preparatives for conversion; (2) Consider them subsequently to conversion as preventives, restoratives, preparatives.

The yoke.—The simile is a most apt one. I had frequent opportunities of witnessing the conduct of oxen when, for the first time, put into the yoke to assist in dragging the wagons. On observing an ox that had been in the yoke for seven or eight hundred miles beginning to get weak, or his hoofs to be worn down to the quick, by treading on the sharp gravel, a fresh ox was put into the yoke in his place. When the selection fell on an ox I had received as a present from some African king, of course one completely unaccustomed to the yoke, such generally made a strenuous struggle for liberty,—repeatedly breaking the yoke, and attempting to make its escape. At other times such bullocks lay down upon their sides or backs, and remained so in defiance of the Hottentots, though two or three of them would be lashing them with their ponderous whips. Sometimes, from pity to the animal, I would interfere, and beg them to be less cruel. "Cruel!" they would say, "it is mercy, for if we do not conquer him now, he will require to be so beaten all his life." Some oxen would seem convinced of the folly of opposing the will of the Hottentots by the end of the first day; some about the middle of the second; while some would continue the struggle to the third; after which they would go on as willingly and quietly as any of their neighbour oxen. They seemed convinced that their resisting was fruitless as kicking against the pricks, or sharp-pointed iron, which they could not injure, but that every kick they gave only injured themselves.[e]

22—26. (22) **daughter**, Israel. **compass**, or give her protection to.[a] (23) **as yet**, or again. The old form of blessing shall be renewed. (24) **go forth with flocks**, *i.e.* the scattered peoples of the land, who live by shepherding. (25) **satiated**, fully satisfied. (26) **I awaked**, *i.e.* the Prophet, who had seen all this joy and prosperity of the restoration time in his dreams.

Waymarks in the East.—Dr. Bonar, writing of his journey through the Wilderness near the spot of Israel's first encampment, says, "We rode off about nine, through a fine large plain; but quite a plain of the desert,—no stream, no verdure: at first soft sand, then hard gravel, then stones, and all these generally of a white colour. Ras Atâkah towered upon our right, full in the morning sunshine. No trace of a road appeared, for though the camels do form a track, or rather a number of parallel tracks, yet the drifting sand obliterates them, or washes them out. Still the waymarks are visible everywhere,—consisting of small heaps of stones set up on each side, which are carefully preserved by the Bedouin; for even they might at times be at a loss as to the way so great is the sameness of the region for miles on every hand. Jeremiah's words came into mind, 'Set thee up waymarks; make thee high heaps, set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest' (chap. xxxi. 21). The sand does not seem to obliterate these, or, if it does, they are renewed from time to time. They were always a welcome sight to us, assuring us that we were in the right track; for at times we began to ask whether even our Arabs were sure of their way; so waste did the desert appear, without a mark or foot-trace of any kind whatsoever."[b]

27—30. (27) **sow . . beast**, a striking fig. to represent the swift and abundant increase of the population.[a] (28) **watched**,

c "The burden of punishment and shame due to the sins of my youth, my former estate, ever since the exodus from Egypt."—*Wordsworth.*

r. 18. *Dr. H. Hammond*, iv. 483; *R. Hall*, v. 303; *S. Davies*, i. 227; *S. Lowell*, 103; *F. Close*, i. 144; *Dr. E. Payson*, ii. 469.

e Campbell.

a "Israel, who is feeble as a woman, shall be superior to the warlike Chaldæans."—*Calvin.*

The Christian Fathers see a reference in this passage to the Virgin Mary.

r. 22. *J. Alting*, *Op.* ii. 4, 136; *Bossuet*, vii. 71.

"There are three parts in truth: first, the inquiry, which is the wooing of it; secondly, the knowledge of it, which is the presence of it; and thirdly, the belief, which is the enjoyment of it."—*Bacon.*

b Days and Nights in the East.

a Eze. xxxvi. 8—11; Ho. ii. 23.

for the right opportunity for punishing them. watch .. build, using similar care and vigilance in the bestowment of restoring mercies. (29) fathers, *etc.*,[b] see Eze. xviii. 2. (30) own iniquity,[c] bec. the special judgments affecting the race as a whole would be removed.

The sure consequences of sin (*v.* 30).—I shall notice this solemn declaration—I. As an answer to the prevailing sentiment of that day. 1. It must be confessed there was ground for it; 2. But though in some respects this proverb was true, yet as uttered by them it was false and presumptuous. II. As a declaration of God's established rule of procedure in all ages, sin shall not go unpunished—1. In this world; 2. In the world to come. Application:—(1) Contemplate not so much the immediate as the remote consequences of sin; (2) Contemplate the provision which God has made for those who repent them of their sins.[d]

31—34. (31) new covenant, He. viii. 8—12. (32) with .. fathers, *i.e.* not the old Mosaic covenant, which required a formal obedience. an husband, having authority over them, and ever dealing with them compassionately and tenderly. (33) inward parts, giving them right principles, and a right disposition, so that obedience shall become easy to them. their God, ch. xxxii. 38. (34) teach no more, bec. all being right-minded none will need to be constrained to do right. God will give greater measure of His grace.

The New Covenant (*v.* 31).—In these words the Old and the New Covenants are placed in opposition to each other. The latter is represented as being—I. More effective in its provisions. Under it obedience will be—1. Spiritual; 2. Loving; 3. Cheerful; 4. Diligent; 5. Persevering. II. More comprehensive in its range. We have here—1. An important truth implied; 2. A cheering assurance given; 3. A striking reason adduced. III. More secure as regards its stability.

Divine forgiveness.—All God's acquittances are general: not as men's, only from the beginning of the world to that day that the acquittance is made, but from the beginning of the world to the end of it. His pardon, where it is once given, can never be revoked, or cancelled again. He forgiveth not as man doth, but when He forgiveth our sins, He forgetteth them also. Whom God hath once pardoned, He never so forsaketh that they shall quite lose His favour again. This pardon sets us in as good state before God, as if we had never sinned. "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."[a]

35—37. (35) divideth, or stirreth up, comp. ch. xxxiii. 20; Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37. (36) those ordinances, such as of the sun, moon, sea, etc. God's purpose concerning His people is as unchangeable as the laws of nature are. (37) heaven .. measured, ch. xxxiii. 22.

The Church's security (*vv.* 35—37).—Let us contemplate—I. The promises here made to God's Church and people. Certainly they refer—1. To God's ancient people, the Jews: 2. To the Christian Church. II. The use which is to be made of them by individual believers. We should be careful—1. As to the persons to whom they belong; 2. As to the extent to which they are to be applied; 3. As to the use that is to be made of them when they are so applied. Lay down the following rules:—(1) Seek to

b "The proverb among the exiles' children born in Babylon, to express that they suffered the evil consequences of their fathers' sins, rather than of their own."—*Fausset.*

c Ga. vi. 5, 7.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 31. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 153; *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kys.* 414.

v. 33. *T. Hartley*, 265.

v. 34. *J. Scott*, 289.

"After all, the most natural beauty in the world is honesty and moral truth; for all beauty is truth. True features make the beauty of a face, and true proportions the beauty of architecture, as true measures that of harmony and music. In poetry, which is all fable, truth still is the perfection."—*Shaftesbury.*

a S. Hildersham (1635).

vv. 34—40. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 167.

"The most sublime spectacle in the world is a powerful mind vindicating truth in the presence of its foes, and a martyr calmly sealing his faith with his blood."—*Colton.*

gain Christ Himself as your portion: (2) Embrace His promises with humility; (3) Improve them with all care.[a]

[a] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

38—40. (38) tower . . corner, the ancient limits of the city.[a] (39) Gareb, the future Calvary.[b] "The locality outside the city, where lepers were removed to." Goath, a toilsome ascent, towards the S.W. (40) valley, *etc.*, ch. vii. 32. Tophet; S. of the city. horse gate, Ne. iii. 28. not be plucked up, the rebuilt city shall be established for long generations.

[a] Ne. iii. 1; Zec. xiv. 10; 2 Ki. xiv. 13.

[b] *Lightfoot.*

"Accustom your children to a strict attention to truth, even in the most minute particulars. If a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation from truth will end."—*Dr. Johnson.*

Variable fruitfulness.—For so have I known a luxuriant vine swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but trifling clusters to the vine-press, and a faint return to his heart which longed to be refreshed with a full vintage; but when the lord of the vine had caused the dressers to cut the wilder plant, and made it bleed, it grew temperate in its vain expense of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy bunches, and made accounts of that loss of blood by the return of fruit. So is an afflicted province cured of its surfeits, and punished for its sins, and bleeds for its long riot, and is left ungoverned for its disobedience, and chastised for its wantonness: and when the sword hath let forth the corrupted blood, and the fire hath purged the rest, then it enters into the double joys of restitution, and gives God thanks for His rod, and confesses the mercies of the Lord in making the smoke to be changed into fire, and the cloud into a perfume, the sword into a staff, and His anger into mercy.[c]

[c] *I. Taylor.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

1—5. (1) tenth year, the siege of Jerus. began in Zedek.'s ninth year.[a] It was temporarily raised upon the approach of an army fr. Egypt.[b] (2) in the court, *etc.*, Jer. had been arrested on attempting to leave Jerusalem. At first he was only in custody, afterwards he was put into a dungeon. (3) shut him up, put him in confinement, fearing the mischievous influence of his prophecies upon the people. (4) not escape, ch. xxxiv. 2, 3. (5) visit him, an expression that may either mean for restoration, or for punishment.[c]

[a] Je. xxxix. 1; 2 Ki. xxv. 1.

[b] Je. xxxvii. 5.

"The siege lasted from the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign to the fourth month of the eleventh year."—*Lowth.*

Zedekiah's captivity, blindness, and death.—Some superficial or inattentive readers of the Bible have supposed this prophecy, which declares that Zedekiah should behold the king of Babylon, to be contradictory to Ezek. xii. 13, where it is said, he should be brought to Babylon, but should not see it; and, indeed, Josephus tells us that the seeming inconsistency of the two prophecies determined Zedekiah to believe neither of them. Both of them, however, were literally fulfilled. Zedekiah was taken in the plains of Jericho, and sent to the king of Babylon at Riblah (2 Kings xxv. 5, 6), where he then resided, whom he saw and spoke to, and who caused his eyes to be put out. He was then sent to Babylon, which he could not see, and was there imprisoned and died.[d]

[c] "Zedekiah's was a harder fate than the words suggest; Je. xxxix. 6, 7, lii. 11."—*Spk. Com.*

[d] *Carpenter.*

6—12. (6, 7) Hanameel, Jeremiah's first cousin. field in Anathoth,[a] a sacerdotal city, so having 1,000 cubits of suburban fields outside the walls attached to it. right of redemption, Le. xxv. 24, 25; Ru. iv. 3—6. (8) right of inheritance,

[a] This field was at the time in actual possession of the Chaldæan army.

since Hanameel had no children. **then I know**, *i.e.* the coming of Hanameel confirmed the directions I had received. (9) **weighed**, money does not seem to have been coined.[b] **seventeen shekels**, or about 40 shillings. (10) **subscribed**, *etc.*, did all that was necessary properly to secure the transfer of the property. (11) **evidence**,[c] the actual deed, and the testimony of the witnesses. (12) **Baruch**, Jeremiah's agent.[d]

Evidence of purchase.—The double evidences of Jeremiah's purchase, which are mentioned here, seems a strange management in their civil concerns: yet something of the like kind obtains still among them. Both the writings were in the hands of Jeremiah, and at his disposal, verse 14: for what purpose then were duplicates made? To those that are unacquainted with the Eastern usages, it must appear a question of some difficulty. "The open or unsealed writing," says an eminent commentator, "was either a copy of the sealed deed, or else a certificate of the witnesses in whose presence the deed of purchase was signed and sealed."—(Lowth.) But it still recurs, of what use was a copy that was to be buried in the same earthen vessel, and run exactly the same risks with the original? If by a certificate is meant a deed of the witnesses, by which they attested the contract of Jeremiah and Hanameel, and the original deed of purchase had no witnesses at all, then it is natural to ask, why were they made separate writings? and much more, why was one sealed, and not the other? Sir J. Chardin's account of modern managements, which he thinks illustrates this ancient story, is, "that after a contract is made, it is kept by the party himself, not the notary; and they cause a copy to be made, signed by the notary alone, which is shown upon proper occasions, and never exhibit the other." According to this account, the two books were the same, the one sealed up with solemnity, and not to be used on common occasions; that which was open, the same writing, to be perused at pleasure, and made use of upon all occasions. The sealed one answered to a record with us; the other a writing for common use.[e]

13—15. (13) **charged Baruch**, gave him the following instructions. (14) **earthen vessel**, to protect them. This would be hidden in the ground in some secure place, to be found when the land was again inhabited.[a] (15) **again**, *i.e.* subsequent to the captivity.

Preserving documents.—Whatever materials the ancient Jews wrote upon, they were liable to be easily destroyed by the dampness when hidden in the earth. It was therefore thought requisite to enclose them in something that might keep them from the damp, lest they should decay and be rendered useless. In those days of roughness, when war knew not the softenings of later times, men were wont to bury in the earth every part of their property that could be concealed after that manner, not only silver and gold, but wheat, barley, oil, and honey; vestments and writings too. For that I apprehend was the occasion of Jeremiah's ordering that the writings he delivered to Baruch, mentioned in his thirty-second chapter, should be put into and earthen vessel.[b]

16—20. (16) **prayed**, prob. to relieve his own anxiety, and to unburden his own fears. (17) **too hard**, marg. "hid from

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b "When Hannibal laid siege to Rome, the site on which he pitched his camp was put up to auction, and found a purchaser in the besieged city."—*Livy.*

c "Two deeds were drawn up in a contract of sale. The one, the original copy, witnessed and sealed with the public seal; the other not so, but open, and therefore less authoritative, being but a copy. The sealed copy was to be opened after the seventy years' captivity."—*Fausset.*

d Je. xxxvi. 4.

e vv. 6—8. *S. C. Wilks*, i. 339.

A real Christian must learn to die to all his righteousness, as well as to his unrighteousness.

e Harmer.

a "Special care was taken that the deed should sustain no injury from the length of time that would elapse before the Jews could recover their possessions in Palestine."—*Henderson.*

The kingdom of Christ on earth may be compared to a nursery garden; where you will always find far more saplings than grown-up trees.

b Harmer.

Thee;" or "too wonderful for Thee." (18) **shewest**, *etc.*, Ex. xx. 5, 6, xxxiv. 7; Is. lxv. 6. **bosom**, the fold, or pocket of Eastern garments is so called. (19) **eyes . . men**, Job xxxiv. 21: Pr. v. 21. (20) **even unto this day**, *i.e.* memorable even until now.[a]

God's omniscience—The Inquisition, or the record on high.—"Within those blood-stained walls, for whose atrocious cruelties Rome has a heavy account to render, a prisoner is under examination. He has been assured that nothing he reveals shall be recorded or used against him. While making frank and ingenuous confession, he suddenly stops. He is dumb—a mute. They ply him with questions, flatter him, threaten him; but he answers not a word. Danger makes the senses quick. His ear has caught a sound; he listens, and that sound ties his tongue. An arras hangs beside him, and behind it he hears a pen running along the pages. The truth flashes on him. Behind that screen there sits a scribe, committing to the fatal page every word he says, and he shall meet it all again on the day of trial. Ah! how solemn to think that there is such a pen going in heaven, and entering on the books of judgment whatever we say and wish, all we think and do. Would to God we heard it—heard it everywhere—always heard it! What a check it might prove!"[b]

21—25. (21) **has brought**, *etc.*, De. xxvi. 8. **terror**, Ex. xv. 14. (22) **flowing . . honey**, Ex. iii. 8. (23) **possessed it**, settled down in it. (24) **mounts**, siege-works, raised for the battering-rams.[a] (25) **buy thee the field**, purchase of property when the State was just upon its ruin seemed very unreasonable.

The men of old.—

I know not that the men of old
  Were better than men now,
Of heart more kind, of hand more bold,
  Of more ingenuous brow:
I heed not those who pine for force
  A ghost of time to raise.
As if they thus could check the course
  Of these appointed days.

Still is it true and over true,
  That I delight to close
This book of life self-wise and new,
  And let my thoughts repose
On all that humble happiness
  The world has since foregone—
The daylight of contentedness
  That on those faces shone!

With rights, though not too closely scann'd,
  Enjoy'd as far as known—
With will, by no reverse unmann'd—
  With pulse of even tone—
They from to-day and from to-night
  Expected nothing more,
Than yesterday and yesternight
  Had proffer'd them before.

a Calvin.

v. 18. *Dr. J. Tomlinson,* 85.

v. 19. *J. Saurin,* i. 151.

b Dr. Guthrie.

"The trial of faith is by finding what we will do for God. To trust Him when we have securities in our own iron chest is easy, and not thankworthy. But to depend on Him for what we cannot see, as it is more hard for man to do, so it is more acceptable to God when done, for in that act we make confession of His deity."—*Feltham.*

a "Mounds of earth, raised as breastworks by the besieging army, behind which they employed their engines, and which they gradually pushed forward to the walls of the city."—*Fausset.*

"Let us learn, as Luther did, who, looking out of his window one summer evening, saw, on a tree at hand, a little bird making his brief and easy dispositions for a night's rest. 'Look,' said he, 'how that little fellow preaches faith to us all. He takes hold of his twig, tucks his head under his wing, and goes to sleep, *leaving God to think for him.*'"—*P. B. Power.*

"The Rhone is formed of two rivers, running side by side in one channel, the one pure as the blue sky above

it, the other turbid and discoloured; but they do not combine; so truth and error, or good and evil, may live side by side in this world, the one as beautiful as God, the other as ugly as hell; but they do not, they cannot commingle."—*Dr. Cumming.*

"As the sun shining upon a man's face discovers all the wens, warts, and blotches that may be upon it, so the light of truth, shining into the sinner's heart, reveals to him all the evil desires, thoughts, feelings, and everything else, which may lie concealed therein."—*John Bate.*

If you be poor in this world you should be rich in faith; and if you be rich in this world, be poor in spirit.

b Ld. Houghton.

a Je. ii. 7, 25, vii. 23, 28, xxii. 21.

If there is no conformity between Christ and the Christian here, there can be none hereafter.

b Dr. J. Parker.

"The goodness of a Christian lies in his holiness, as the goodness of the air lies in the clearness of it, and the worth of gold in its pureness."—*T. Watson.*

To them was life a simple art
Of duties to be done—
A game where each man took his part,
A race where all must run:
A battle whose great scheme and scope
They little cared to know,
Content, as men at arms, to cope
Each with his fronting foe.

Man now his virtue's diadem
Puts on, and proudly wears—
Great thought, great feelings, came to them,
Life instincts unawares:
Blending their souls' sublimest needs
With tasks of every day,
They went about their gravest deeds,
As noble boys at play.

* * * *

A man's best things are nearest him,
Lie close about his feet;
It is the distant and the dim
That we are sick to greet:
For flowers that grow our hands beneath
We struggle and aspire—
Our hearts must die, except they breathe
The air of fresh desire.

But, brothers, who up reason's hill
Advance with hopeful cheer—
O! loiter not, those heights are chill,
As chill as they are clear;
And still restrain your haughty gaze,
The loftier that ye go.
Remembering distance leaves a haze
On all that lies below.*b*

26—30. (26, 27) God . . flesh, Nu. xvi. 22. Difficulties are never hindrances to God. (28) I will give, or I am giving. That is My settled purpose. (29) roofs, *etc.*, ch. xix. 13. (30) only done, so abundant were their idolatries and rebellions that nothing else could be seen in the review of their history. youth, or origin as a nation.*a*

God's revelation of Himself (*v.* 27).—This is God's revelation of Himself, not the fancy of the speculator, dream of poet, etc. I. Here is a direct assertion of personality, not the voice of creation but of the Creator. II. Here is a direct assertion of dominion, not *a* Lord, but *the* Lord.*b*

31—35. (31) remove . . face, withdraw My protection from it. (32) evil, especially in the encouragement of idolatry, and its attendant immoralities. (33) back, Heb. *neck:* ch. ii. 27. (34) set . . house, ch. vii. 30, 31. (35) cause, *etc.*, ch. vii. 31, xix. 5.

Idolatry.—How senseless it is! We should think that artist beside himself who would undertake to draw a likeness of something which he had never seen, nor ever could see,—to paint a portrait of the air, the wind, or the fragrance of flowers. And

"God is a Spirit." What know we of Him? To whom shall we liken Him?[a]

36—38. (36) now therefore, resuming the argument from *v.* 27. (37) gather them,[a] and so the seeming destruction shall only issue in a great restoration, when, through their afflictions, they are cured of their idolatry. (38) my people, ch. xxiv. 7.

The future conversion of the Jews (*vv.* 37—40).—I. What blessings God has in store for His chosen people. 1. A restoration to their own land; 2. A renewed acknowledgment of their relation to Him: 3. A spirit of piety poured out upon them. II. What security they have for the enjoyment of them. 1. The veracity of God; 2. The power of God. Apply:—(1) What we, if we are God's people, may expect for ourselves; (2) What encouragement we have to labour for our Jewish brethren.[b]

39—41. (39) one heart,[a] Eze. xi. 19. Prob. referring to the reunion of Israel and Judah. (40) everlasting covenant, ch. xxxi. 31, 33.[b] (41) assuredly, *i.e.* in truth, or stability. Indicating God's fixed purpose.

Bible religion (*v.* 40).—I. As having its seat in the heart. 1. Not merely in the intellect; 2. Not merely in the sentiments; 3. Not merely in occasional service. II. As imparted by God. 1. Not miraculously, not irrespective of man's activities; 2. By the ministry of His servants. III. As a safeguard against apostasy.[c]

Religion and reason.—When pure religion and pure reason are compared—when in their entireness they are contemplated in connection, it will be found that religion is much larger than reason; that they may be compared to two circular planes, the one of immensely vaster circumference than the other: that consequently, many parts of religion are beyond reason—deeper than reason—loftier than reason: that there is a border round the edge of religion, which reason does not touch; that when the former surpasses the latter there is no opposition, but that where they come within a common measurement, there they agree—there they correspond—there they fit and cohere together as exactly as two planes with polished surfaces. Within a certain degree, the correspondence of reason and religion may be demonstrated, the perfect reasonableness of Christianity may be shown. From principle to principle, duty to duty, institute to institute, we may go on making our appeal to the unsophisticated understanding, in the Apostle's words, "I speak as unto wise men. judge ye what I say." And if what we can understand should be reasonable, we may conclude that the rest is reasonable. "If," as Boyle says, "God vouchsafes to discover to us, in respect of His nature and attributes, what we cannot know without His information; and since we know that whatever He says mu t be true. we have more reason to believe what He says of Himself and Divine things, than what we should be able to guess at about them by the analogy of things of an infinitely distant nature."[d]

42—44. (42) like as, in similar faithfulness to My word. (43) fields . . land, indicating the resettlement of the country, and orderly government.[a] (44) subscribe evidence, *v.* 10.

Variety in religious character.—We ought, if rightly minded. to rejoice in the exuberance and variety of the spiritual gifts

a Homilist.

a Je. xxxi. 8, 9, 18—20, 33.

Truth will be uppermost one time or other, like cork, though kept down in the water.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

a "In ch. iii. 13, the manifold paths of sins are described as the scattering of men's ways, but under the new covenant they will with one consent walk in the one narrow path of right doing." —*Spk. Com.*

b Ps. lxxxix. 34, 35; Is. lv. 3; He. viii. 10.

"Called an 'everlasting covenant,' not only bec. God will be for ever faithful to it, but bec. the consequences of it will be everlasting." — *Mat. Henry.*

c Dr. Thomas.

v. 40. *R. Warnford*, i. 91; *Dr. H. Draper*, ii. 364.

v. 41. *Dr. Rees*, iv. 485.

d Dr. Stoughton.

a "Trade shall revive, for they shall have money enough to buy land with. Husbandry shall re-

vive, for those that have money shall covet to lay it out upon lands." — *Mat. Henry.*

"It is hard to personate and act a part long; for, where truth is not at the bottom, nature will always be endeavouring to return, and will peep out and betray herself one time or other." — *Tillotson.*

b Dr. Goulburn.

possessed by Christians, just as we delight in the rich variety of nature, or in that of the Word of God. There are many lines of thought in religion, many forms which practical and personal piety takes, although, of course, they are all animated by the same essential principles. St. John and St. Paul were both equally devoted to the cause and person of our Lord, yet no two men ever existed who manifested this devotion in shapes more different. Both these members held of the Head by a living union, but they discharged for the Head functions altogether different. Let us not conceive of all genuine religion as moving in one groove of feeling and practice, and refuse to acknowledge any man as a Christian, because he does not run upon our particular groove. There are several points of view from which Christianity may be surveyed; and although it be one and the same object, from whatever point we look, yet eyes placed on different levels will see it grouped in different perspectives.[b]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

1—3. (1) second time, after the message about the field. shut up, ch. xxxii. 2. 3. (2) maker, Isa. xxxvii. 26. (3) mighty things, or things hidden, or shut up—in the mysterious counsels of God.[a] Poss. alluding to the times of Messiah.

Prayer (*v.* 3).—1. The invitation to prayer. 1. Whose is it? 2. To whom is the invitation addressed? 3. What is the tenor of the invitation? II. The promise. 1. It is general; 2. It is special. Apply:—(1) Reprove the prayerless; (2) Encourage the prayerful.[b]

4—8. (4) thrown .. mounts, pulled down to make inner fortifications.[a] by the sword, or axes,[b] used for breaking down the houses. Or the "sword" may be here put for the soldiers who use the sword.[c] (5) they come, a poetical figure. These ramparts and inner defences are said to advance to fight the Chaldæans. fill, *etc.*, this would be the actual result of the prolonged resistance, and in this form the Divine judgment would be manifested. (6) health, *etc.*, first the cure of its moral evils, then gracious outward restoration. The word rendered *cure*, lit. means, "the long linen bandage employed in dressing wounds." (7) build them, or establish them.[d] (8) cleanse, or pronounce clean.[e]

Conversion of the Jews a matter of importance to God and man (*vv.* 6—9).—Consider—I. The event predicted. In the passage before us God promises to them—1. A discovery of His will; 2. A manifestation of His favour; 3. A communication of His grace. II. The vast importance of it. Mark—1. The interest which God Himself has in it; 2. The interest of the whole world involved in it. Improvement:—(1) Consider what blessings you yourselves enjoy; (2) What reason you have to seek the welfare of your Jewish brethren.[f]

The Jews.—It is not usual to acknowledge much literary obligation to the people of Israel; yet under the liberal toleration and patronage of the Moorish dynasties of Bagdad and Spain they attained to considerable eminence. Two of the earliest writers of travels were Jews. Moses Petachia travelled about the year 1187 through Poland to Tartary, and thence through

a "This invitation betokens God's favour and loving-kindness; that He is ready to comply with the first intimations of His servants' desires."—*Lowth.*

v. 3. *F. Close*, ii. 135.

b G. Brooks.

a "In ancient sieges, as the works of the enemy approached the walls, it was usual to build inner fortifications, and for this purpose houses were pulled down, both to give the vacant space necessary, and to supply materials."—*Spk.Com.*

b Mattocks in 2 Chr. xxxiv. 6; *axes* in Eze. xxvi. 9.

c Henderson.

d Je. xxiv. 6, xxxi. 4, 28, xlii. 10.

e Eze. xxxvi. 25; Zec. xiii. 1; He. ix. 13, 14.

v. 6. *A. Roberts.* ii. 81.

f C. Simeon, M.A.

various Asiatic countries to Jerusalem; and about the same period appeared the work ascribed to Benjamin Ben Iona, commonly called Benjamin of Tudela, who is represented to have been a native of Navarre, and a student of Cordova. "*Laus non ultima sabbatariorum.*" His journeys are stated to have extended by the way of Constantinople, through Antioch, to Jerusalem; thence to Tadmor, and the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris. Bagdad was then under the government of the Abassides, to whose toleration of the Jews our traveller bears ample testimony. His course then lay through Persia, and he returned by the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea to Egypt and Sicily.[g]

9—11. (9) it shall be, *i.e.* the restored Jewish nation. a praise,[a] Is. lxii. 7. fear and tremble, with awe at the signs of the power and faithfulness of Israel's God.[b] (10) shall be desolate, better, "is desolate."[c] The Prophet seems to see the land as the people thought of it during the time of the captivity —uninhabited and silent. (11) voice, *etc.*, ch. vii. 34. xvi. 9. praise, *etc.*, comp. Ezr. iii. 11. cause to return, or reverse.[d]

Modern Jerusalem.—At the season of Easter, when the thoughts of half the world turn, or ought to turn, to the hills of Jerusalem, it is curious to be receiving the annual official report of our consul upon the Holy City! Foolscap paragraphs about the vicinity of Calvary and the Via Dolorosa! A blue-book from Bethany and the Mount of Olives! The Foreign Office of "the Britons," who were only just known to exist when the first Good Friday and the first Easter Sunday dawned—the Foreign Office of that barbaric race now "having the honour" to acknowledge particulars as to the quantity of Manchester cottons and Staffordshire pots and pans which have lately entered "thy gates, O Jerusalem!" Says the Consul, eighteen thousand pounds' worth of calicoes and shirtings have been imported into "Zion," and six thousand pounds' worth of hardware. Moreover, although the attempt to supply the city with water from the pools of Solomon has failed, and the American colony is no success, they are still doing great things in a small way—making a carriageable path down to Jaffa, and clearing the road to Jericho of the thieves who linger there, as they do on most other roads, long after the Samaritan has disappeared. The sleepy, dim, half-alive official report is a perfectly fair picture of the sleepy, dim, half-alive capital which is so ancient and was so holy. There she stands now, the "city of God," a drab and whitewashed mass of mean houses, straggling over her ragged *enceinte*, inside the girdle of her useless walls. Those walls, and a few commanding objects, like the domes of the Holy Sepulchre, and of the harem, make her retain a certain vestige of her greatness; but with the far vision of the heart must that eye see, to which Jerusalem can now appear anything but an ugly, hot, mean, stagnant town. From one point, perhaps, the bend of the path to Bethany, some queenly state lingers about the place which Titus found almost too beautiful to ruin, and over which, at that very spot, the eyes that wept for Lazarus shed Divine tears. There the great masonry of Solomon makes a foreground, and the blue and green cirque of the Great Mosque promises the traveller what he will not realise. But, from any other point—and, more than all, upon entering the streets—this centre of the thought of Christendom is as unlike the metropolis of religion and of civi-

It is the high privilege of a true believer to see nothing between God and his soul but the Lord Jesus Christ.

g Percy Anec.

a "That is, the subject of men's praise and admiration, the glory of which redounds to God, who is her protector."—*Louth.*

b Comp. Ps. cxxxix. 14; Is. lx. 5.

c Je. xxxii. 43.

d "To 'reverse the captivity' does not here mean to restore the captives from their exile, but to restore the country from the circumstances of desolation to wh. it had been reduced, although this naturally presupposed the restoration of its inhabitants."—*Henderson.*

"When, on one occasion, a crowd of crusaders approached the Holy City, and caught the first sight of its spires through the blue luminous tremors of the distance, some knelt in silent praise, some kissed the earth, some prayed, and laughed, and wept in wild emotion; and knight and palmer, old man and little child, joined to raise the cry, 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem!'"—*Stanford.*

"The Christian must be like the sun; but he must not be like Hezekiah's sun, which went backwards; nor like Joshua's sun, which stood still; but he must be like David's sun, which rejoices as a giant to run his race." —*Bishop Hall.*

"Christianity has given to truth a dignity independent of time and numbers. It has required that truth should be believed and respected for itself." —*Vinet.*

[e] *Daily Telegraph.*

lisation as a Bedouin camp, or the place that most resembles it in situation—the Constantina of Algeria. Filth, poverty, dust, heat, disease, and fleas are the genuine native commodities of modern Jerusalem. The chief feature of the yellow, sunburnt suburb outside the Damascus gate prepares the pilgrim well for the interior. Right and left he observes vast numbers of tombstones, cut or painted with Hebrew letters—a great camp of the dead!—a "multitude which no man can number"—hustling and elbowing one another all down the Valley of Jehoshaphat round to Siloam, up the slope of Olivet, and on both sides of waterless Kedron, for room to lie under the walls of Salem. There are the graves of Jews who have come from all parts of the earth to die in the holy air, and to be ready for the judgment-day at Tophet, without the pain of having to find their way underneath the ground to the spot where they think all flesh will be summoned to the "dread assize." Fitly does the pilgrim pass through this suburb of the dead into the dead city, "mooning in" on his weary mule or camel, along with a few Manchester calicoes and Staffordshire pots, perchance, or, it may be, with a wrinkled olive-seller or two, bearing fruit as wrinkled from the old gnarled trees in Gethsemane. What he will see after he passes the knot of lepers, winking and blinking with rotting visages in the sun, are tumble-down hovels, grimy, dark lanes, squalid bazaars, frowsy, dejected Fellaheen, slinking Arabs, sleepy Turks, miserable Israelites, rascally-looking Christians; no life, no joy, no stir, no colour in the "place of David;" only the state of things which this report depicts, when not a shirt apiece is bought in the year, and the main road from the Jaffa gate to the sea remains, and is likely to remain, a break-neck mule-path.[e]

12—14. (12) habitation . . down,[a] the free occupation of the land by shepherds is an effective indication of its peaceful and secure condition. (13) telleth, *i.e.* counteth.[b] (14) good thing, or good word: ch. xxix. 10, xxiii. 5, 6.[c]

Numbering the flocks.—It was the custom of more accurate or severe masters to number their flocks in the morning when they went out to pasture, and again in the evening when they returned to the fold. But the most indulgent masters seem to have always numbered their flocks in the evening; a fact clearly attested by Virgil in the close of his sixth Eclogue:

> "Cogere donec oves stabulis numerumque referre
> Jussit, et invito processit vesper Olympo."

"Till vesper warned the shepherds to pen their sheep in the folds and recount their number: and advanced on the sky, full loth to lose the song." Agreeably to this custom, the Prophet Jeremiah is directed by the Spirit of God to promise, "The flocks shall pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the Lord." The reference of these words to the rod of the shepherd numbering his flock, when they return from the pasture, appears from the verse immediately preceding: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Again in this place, which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds, causing their flocks to lie down."[d]

15—18. (15) branch, ch. xxiii. 5. (16) our righteousness, Heb. *Jehovah-tsidkenu.*[a] (17) never want a man, *Heb.* "there

[a] Is. lxv. 10; Je. l. 19.

[b] "'Every shepherd tells his tale,' *i.e.* 'counts the number of his sheep.'" —*Milton's L'Allegro.*

"Shepherds in sending forth and bringing back their sheep to the fold, count them by striking each as it passes with a rod."—*Fausset.*

[c] "'I will make to rise,' God's promise having for a time seemed to *lie* dead and abortive." —*Calvin.*

vv. 14–26. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 180.

[d] *Paxton.*

[a] "The name is here given to

shall not be cut off from David." The perpetuity of the kingdom, and the Levitical order, are only realised spiritually in the Messiah.[b] (18) Levites, these stand here to represent the restoration of the religious and ceremonial system.

Hill and his gardener.—The Rev. Rowland Hill had great reason to rejoice in the consistent lives and zealous devotion to God of many of his people at Wotton. There was amongst them a person of the name of Rugg, of a piety so deep, and of a life so useful and unblemished, that even his enemies admired and were awed by his character. Mr. Hill's gardener at Wotton, who had always passed for an honest, quiet sort of man, was at length discovered to have been the perpetrator of several burglaries and other daring robberies in the neighbourhood, though he had, till caught in the fact, never been even suspected. He was tried at Gloucester, condemned, and executed. It need scarcely be said that his master visited him in jail. During his interview with him there, he confessed the many crimes of which he had been guilty. "How was it, William," he inquired, "that you never robbed me, when you had such abundant opportunity?" "Sir," replied he, "do you recollect the juniper bush on the border against the dining-room? I have many times hid under it at night, intending, which I could easily have done, to get into the house and plunder it; but, sir, I was afraid: something said to me, He is a man of God: it is a house of prayer; if I break in I shall surely be found out: so I never could pluck up courage to attempt it." In another conversation he told him, "Sir, I well knew that old Mr. Rugg was in the habit of carrying a deal of money in his pocket: times and times have I hid behind the hedge of the lane leading to his house—he has passed within a yard of me, when going home from the prayer-meeting, again and again; I could not stir; I durst not touch so holy a man. I was afraid. I always began to tremble as soon as he came near me, and gave up the thought altogether, for I knew he was a holy man."[c]

19—22. (19, 20) break . . day, conceive of the Divine ordinances in nature as failing:[a] ch. xxxi. 35, 36. (21) covenant . . David, 2 Sa. vii. 12—16. (22) host, *etc.*, ch. xxxi. 37. Fulfilled spiritually in Christian believers; the true Israelites, the spiritual seed of Abraham.

Jerusalem discoveries.—Outside Jerusalem how much remains for us to learn! The field has been scarcely furrowed by the merest surface plough: and whole districts, with many a mountain nook, are virgin soil to the Western explorer. We have in the Book of Joshua the Domesday Book of the land of Israel. Who yet has taken that olden roll in hand, and verified by it the sites and caves, the living villages and the ruinous heaps which stud every corner of the land? Let us remember that what Rawlinson, and Layard, and Botta have done for the history of the later monarchy in the mounds of Assyria and Chaldæa, yet remains to be done for Numbers and Joshua, and for the golden period of the Israelitish monarchy. It is not for nothing, surely, that Providence has left it within our grasp, in a sceptical age—in an age devoted, beyond all others, to physical research and physical evidences—to elucidate the details of the Word written, by the numberless illustrations which every diligent exploration of the land, which is, as it were, the framework, the setting, of

Jerus., *i.e.* to the Church, bec. it is her business immediately to work on earth that righteousness which Christ works absolutely."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] 2 Sa. vii. 16; Ps. lxxxix. 29. The brightest Christian, in his graces is not unlike the sea, which never continues long at high water mark. "In the channel through which a running stream is directed upon a mill wheel, the same turning of a valve that shuts the water out of one course throws it into another. Thus the Jews, by rejecting the counsel of God, shut themselves out, and at the same moment opened a way whereby mercy might flow to us who were afar off."—*Rev. William Arnot.*

[c] *Cheever.*

[a] "The perpetual succession of day and night, in virtue of the Divine ordinance to that effect, is appealed to as a pledge of the inviolability of the promise made by God both to David and the Levites."—*Henderson.* Comp. Nu. xxv. 12, 13; Ps. lxxxix. 3 28, 34; Mal. ii. 4, 5, 8. A pious man resembles a well-tempered blade; it may be turned aside momentarily, but there is that in it which will soon cause it to return to its former straightness.

b *The Christian Advocate and Review.*

the Divine history, at once affords. It matters nothing to the truth of God's Word where stood the temple of Solomon, where are buried the ruins of Capernaum, where Israel pitched their tents in the wilderness, where John preached the baptism of repentance; but it does matter something to our understanding of that Word, that we should be able to show its minute and exact accordance with the existing facts of local topography.[b]

23—26. (23, 24) two families, *i.e.* the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. before them, or in their judgment. Those who think thus of Israel and Judah are the Chaldæans: or, more generally, those who thought the Jews would never be restored to their former condition. (25) covenant, *v.* 20. (26) then, but not till then.[a] will cause, *etc.*, ch. xxxii. 44.

Necessity of correct belief.—Go into New York, and in the Sixth Ward you shall find two representative men. One says, "I voted for the judge, and helped to put him where he is, and he will wink at my crimes. I can drink as much as I please, on Sundays and on week-days, and he will not disturb me. He is easy and good-natured, and he is not going to be hard with me if I do break the laws a little." And the man, because he believes that the judge does not care for his wickedness, and will not punish him, grows bold and corrupt in transgression. But at length he is brought before the court, and he finds there, instead of his bribed judge, a white-faced man—not red-faced; one of those men with a long head upward—not backward and downward; a man with a full sense of the value of justice and truth. The culprit begins his shuffling excuses. The judge listens to none of them; he reads the law, and says, "Your conduct is herein condemned," and sends him away to receive his just deserts. When the man has expiated his crime, he goes around in the same ward, and says, "You must walk straight hereafter. The judge that sits on the bench now is not the jolly old judge that used to sit there. If you go before him, he will make you smart." Does it not make a difference what a man believes about a judge? If he believes that he is a lenient, conniving judge, does it not make him careless? And if he believes that he is a straightforward judge, does it not make him afraid of transgression? Now lift up the judge's bench, and make it the judgment-seat; and take out the human judge, and put God Almighty there. If men believe Him to be an all-smiling God—a God that is all sunshine, an all-sympathising God—a God that is nothing but kindness, and goodness, and gentleness, they say to themselves, "We will do as we have a mind to." Take away that miserable slander upon the revealed character of God, and lift up the august front of Justice, on whose brow love proudly sits, and let men see that there is a vast heart of love and gentleness indeed, but one that will by no means clear the guilty, and they will take more heed to their conduct. Does it, then, make no difference what a man believes about God's nature, and His manner of dealing with men? It makes all the difference between laxity and earnestness, between an endeavour to live truly and no endeavour at all in that direction; between right and wrong conduct.[b]

a "Christ is that seed of David that is to be perpetual dictator to the seed of Ab, Is, and Jacob; and as this people shall never want such a King, so this King shall never want such a people. Christianity shall continue in the dominion of Christ, and the subjection of Christians to Him, till day and night come to an end." — *Matthew Henry.*

vv. 24—26. *W. R. Freemantle, Blooms. Lec.* v. 78.

"At one time, when a pious minister of the Gospel was passing over a hill, a lark, pursued by a hawk, took refuge in his bosom: he kindly lodged the little refugee, till, having reached a considerable distance from its persecutor, he gave it liberty to soar and sing in safety. The circumstance suggested to his mind a train of happy thoughts, which he brought forward in a discourse from Psalm xxxiv. 22, 'The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants: and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.'" — *Whitecross.*

b *H. W. Beecher.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

1—3. (1) kingdoms . . dominion, *Heb.* "The dominion of his hand."[a] people, or peoples, races, tribes, under his rule.[b] (2) burn it, a sign of the exasperated state of Nebuchadnezzar's mind. The fate of the city would be unusually hard. This prophecy of Jer.'s specially threatened the king. (3) taken, ch. xxxii. 4.

From Jerusalem to Jericho.—A journey into the country of the Bedouin Arabs requires to be taken under their guidance and protection. They by such means levy black-mail on all travellers who pass through their country. It seems singular that the Sultan does not provide guards or make the roads safe. But it seems to be a part of the peculiar misgovernment of the country to allow the Bedouin tribes of each locality to levy contributions on travellers, or, in other words, to rob them of conduct money. Travellers have to purchase the protection of the Bedouins of the Jordan against all enemies of their own or neighbouring tribes; and the agreement is to the effect that they shall be taken by the Sheik Reschid and a proper guard to the Dead Sea and the Jordan, and back in safety to Jerusalem. Without such protection the journey is simply impossible, and there is an amusing account of a lady and gentleman who had attempted the trip without the formality of a Bedouin guard, and who had been met and robbed of their baggage, their money, clothes, and valuables, the gentleman having to beg of the Bedouin robbers the *Times* newspaper in which to clothe himself and his wife. The husband returned to Jerusalem in that valuable journal, his wife being wrapped up in the supplement.[c]

4—7. (4) thou . . sword, this assurance, however, implies his captivity. (5) burnings, *etc.*, receiving the honours of a royal funeral.[a] (6, 7) Lachish, 2 Ki. xviii. 13, xix. 8. These were outlying fortresses which, at the time of the prophecy, had not fallen into Nebuchadnezzar's hands.

Allegory of death.—Now I further saw, that betwixt them and the gate was a river; but there was no bridge to go over, and the river was very deep. At the sight, therefore, of this river, the pilgrims were much stunned; but the men that went with them said, "You must go through, or you cannot come at the gate." They then addressed themselves to the water; and, entering, Christian began to sink; and, crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head; all his waves go over me." Then said the other, "Be of good cheer, my brother: I feel the bottom, and it is good." Then said Christian, "Ah! my friend, the sorrow of death hath compassed me about: I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey." And with that a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him. Hopeful, therefore, here had much ado to keep his brother's head above water; yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then ere a while would rise up again half dead. Hopeful did also endeavour to comfort him, saying, "Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us;" but Christian would answer, "It is you they wait for: you have been hopeful ever since I

a "This prediction belongs in point of time to ch. xxxii. 1—5, and is merely an amplification of what is contained in those *vv.* It was consequently delivered before Jeremiah was placed in custody."—*Henderson.*

b "The verbose description well suits the pomp of an Oriental army; and also describes the fact, that such an army consisted of a loose aggregate of tributary and half-conquered nations and tribes, held together by the personal influence of one man."—*Spk. Com.*

c *Jewish Chronicle.*

a "It was customary among the Jews, at the funeral of their kings, esp. of those whose memory they honoured, to prepare a bed of spices (2 Chr. xvi. 14), which they made a perfume of by burning them, and therein to deposit the body of the deceased prince."—*Lowth.*

"I wish a character as decisive as that of a lion or a tiger, and an impetus towards the important objects of my choice as forcible as theirs towards prey and hostility; wish to have an extensive atmosphere of consciousness; a soul

which can mingle with every element in every form, which, like an Æolian harp, arrests even the vagrant winds, and makes them music." — *J. Foster.*

b Bunyan.

knew you." "And so have you," said he to Christian. "Ah, brother!" said he, "surely, if I was right, He would now rise to help me; but for my sins He hath brought me into the snare, and hath left me." Then I saw in my dream that Christian was in a muse a while. To whom, also, Hopeful added these words, "Be of good cheer: Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." And with that Christian brake out with a loud voice, "Oh! I see Him again, and He tells me, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'" Then they both took courage, and the enemy was after that as still as a stone until they were gone over.[b]

a De. xv. 12.
b Je. xxxvii. 7, also xxxiv. 21, 22.
"Jesus Christ not only called Lazarus into life, but He commanded the grave-clothes to be taken off him, that he might have *liberty in life*. Life, without liberty from the grave-clothes, would scarcely have been a blessing. So Jesus Christ not only gives life to the soul which believes in Him; He also commands the Spirit to descend upon him, to set him free from all enslaving habits. 'If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.'" —*John Bate.*
c W. Smith.
"When I see the spirit of liberty in action, I see a strong principle at work; and this for a while is all I can possibly know of it. The wild gas, the fixed air, is plainly broke loose; but we ought to suspend our judgment, until the first effervescence is a little subsided, till the liquor is cleared, and until we see something deeper than the agitation of a troubled and frothy sub-

8—11. (8) proclaim liberty, Ex. xxi. 2. "By the law a Hebrew, after having been a bond-servant for six years, on the seventh was to be let go free."[a] (9) serve himself of, *i.e.* make the Hebrew serve him. (10) obeyed, carried out the wishes of the king, who prob. adopted this policy to secure fresh drafts of soldiers. The Prophet sees in it a hopeful return to the obedience of the Mosaic law. (11) turned, *etc.*, this was during the time that the Chaldæans raised the siege, prob. in order to meet an Egyptian army.[b]

Love of liberty.—John Milton, the chief of poets, held the post of Latin Secretary under Cromwell. At the restoration he was of course dismissed from his office. He was now poor and blind, and to these afflictions Charles II. added political persecutions; he fined him, and doomed his writings on liberty to be publicly burned. Nothing daunted by these fierce and multiplied trials, the great poet retired into private life, evoked his mighty genius, and produced *Paradise Lost*. But after he had endured the ills of poverty several years, Charles, feeling the need of his matchless talents, invited him to resume his former post, with all its honours, emoluments, and court favours. But Milton knew that the price of this honour must be silence on the great question of human liberty. Therefore he did not hesitate a moment. It was a strong temptation—the bribe was splendid. By merely keeping silence, he could have honour, abundance, and high position, in exchange for poverty, persecution, and neglect! But this could not be. The poet loved truth too well. His soul was too noble, too sincere, too firm in its allegiance to God and liberty, to barter away its right to condemn tyranny for place or gold. Hence he spurned the royal offer, and clung to his principles and his poverty, until death called his free soul to enter its congenial heaven. And so gentle was the summons, so sweetly calm was his unruffled spirit to the hour of dissolution, that his friends knew not the precise moment of his death.[c]

12—16. (12) therefore, on account of this insulting act of disobedience. (13, 14) covenant, *etc.*, Ex. xxi. 2: De. xv. 12. It seems that the last year of Zedekiah was the Sabbatical year. It seems that the Sabbatical years had been altogether neglected for a long time previous to the captivity. (15) done right, they had seemed to be correcting their fault. in the house, or Temple. This indicates that the matter had been public and solemn, being transacted in the Temple. The insult of the disobedience was therefore the more marked. (16) turned, again to the old wilful ways.

Christian liberty.—

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song:
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And He by means, in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanising what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love. . . .
He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides.[a]

17—22. (17) **liberty to you**, freedom fr. the Divine protection, which will leave you a hopeless prey to your enemies. (18) **cut the calf**, referring to the significant rite by which the covenant was sealed.[a] Ge. xv. 10. (19) **princes of Judah**, "territorial magnates." (20) **dead**, *etc.*, ch. vii. 33, xvi. 4. (21) **gone up from you**, or have temporarily raised the siege. (22) **return**, and complete their work.

Dividing victims for sacrifice.—It was a customary thing to cut the victim (which was to be offered as a sacrifice upon the occasion) into two parts, and so placing each half upon a different altar, to cause those who contracted the covenant to pass between them (Gen. xv. 9, 10, 17). This rite was practised both by believers and heathens at their solemn leagues—at first doubtless with a view to the great Sacrifice, who was to purge our sins in His own blood; and the offering of these sacrifices, and passing between the parts of the divided victim, was symbolically staking their hopes of purification and salvation on their performance of the conditions on which it was offered. This remarkable practice may be clearly traced in the Greek and Latin writers. Homer has the following expression, "Having cut faithful oaths." Eustathius explains the passage by saying they were oaths relating to important matters, and were made by the division of the victim. The editor of the *Fragments Supplementary to Calmet* is of opinion that what is yet practised of this ceremony may elucidate that passage in Isa. xxviii. 15. "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehoods have we hid ourselves;" *i.e.* we have cut off a covenant sacrifice, a purification offering with death, and with the grave we have settled, so that the scourge shall not injure us. The following superstition is related by Pitts: "If the Algerine corsairs, at any time, happen to be in a very great strait or distress, as being chased, or in a storm, they will gather money, light up candles in remembrance of some dead marrabot (saint) or other, calling upon him with heavy sighs and groans. If they find no succour from their before-mentioned rites and superstition, I must be tolerably sure, before I congratulate men upon a blessing, that they have really received one. Flattery corrupts both the receiver and giver, and adulation is not of more service to the people than to kings."—*Burke.*

Nothing more unbecomes a heavenly hope than an earthly heart.

a Cowper.

a An ancient writer relates that Agamemnon, the leader of the Greeks, at the siege of Troy, "to confirm his faith sworn to Achilles, ordered victims to be brought. He took one, and with his sword *divided it in the midst*, placed the pieces opposite to each other, and holding his sword, reeking with the blood, passed between the separated pieces."

"Passing between the divided pieces implied the willingness of the parties to be so treated, if they failed in adhering to the stipulations."—*Henderson.*

v. 18. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 633.

"O Liberty, parent of happiness, celestial-born! When the first man became a living soul, his sacred genius thou. Be Britain's care; with her secure, prolong thy loved retreat; thence bless mankind;

while yet among her sons, ev'n yet there are, to shield thine equal laws, whose bosoms kindle at the sacred names of Cecil, Raleigh, Walsingham, and Drake."—*Dyer.*

The spiritually-minded Christian, when the sun of righteousness shines upon his path, looks upon all his sins as upon his shadow, viz., as "cast behind his back."

tions, but that the danger rather increases, then they go to sacrificing a sheep (or two or three upon occasion, as they think needful), which is done after this manner: having cut off the head with a knife, they immediately take out the entrails, and throw them and the head overboard, and then, with all speed they can (without skinning), they cut the body into two parts by the middle, and throw one part over the right side of the ship, and the other over the left, into the sea, as a kind of propitiation. Thus those blind infidels apply themselves to imaginary intercessors instead of the living and true God." In the case here referred to the ship passes between the parts thus thrown on each side of it. This behaviour of the Algerines may be taken as a pretty accurate counterpart to that of making a covenant with death, and with imminent danger of destruction, by appeasing the angry gods. Festivities always accompanied the ceremonies attending oaths. Isaac and Abimelech feasted at making their covenant. Gen. xxvi. 30: "And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink." Gen. xxxi. 54: "Jacob offered sacrifice upon the Mount, and called his brethren to eat bread." This practice was also usual among the heathen nations.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

1—5. (1) **Jehoiakim**, the predecessor of Zedekiah. This prophecy is seventeen years earlier than the manumission of the slaves, narrated in the prev. ch. (2) **Rechabites**, a tribe of Arabs, of the family of Jethro.[a] **wine to drink**, by this their firm allegiance to principle was to be tested. One of their chief rules was not to drink wine. (3) **Jaazaniah**, *etc.*, chief men of the tribe; some who had found shelter for a time in Jerusalem. (4) **chamber . . princes**, these chambers were round the temple-courts. This one may have been a kind of council-chamber. **door**, or threshold. (5) **drink**, observe that Jer. does not call upon them to drink *in the name of the Lord*, then they would have been bound to obey him.

The Rechabites.—"On my arrival at Mesopotamia, some Jews that I saw there pointed out to me one of the ancient Rechabites. He stood before me, wild, like an Arab, holding the bridle of his horse in his hand. I showed him the Bible in Hebrew and Arabic, which he was much rejoiced to see, as he could read both languages, but had no knowledge of the New Testament. After having proclaimed to him the tidings of salvation, and made him a present of the Hebrew and Arabic Bibles and Testaments, I asked him, 'Whose descendant are you?' 'Mousa,' said he, boisterously, 'is my name, and I will show you who were my ancestors;' on which he immediately began to read from the 5th to the 11th vv. of Jer. xxxv. 'Where do you reside?' said I. Turning to Gen. x. 27, he replied: 'At Hadoram, now called Simar by the Arabs; at Uzal, now called Sanan by the Arabs;' and again referring to the same chapter, verse 30th, he continued: 'At Mesha, now called Mecca, in the deserts around those places. We drink no wine, and plant no vineyard, and sow no seed; and live in tents, as Jonadab our father commanded us: Hobab was our father too. Come to us, and you will find us sixty thousand

[a] Ex. xviii. 9; Nu. x. 29, 32; Ju. i. 16; 1 Chr. ii. 55. "This tribe came into Palestine with the Israelites, but, in order to maintain their independence, they led a nomadic life, without fixed settlements, and so were able without difficulty to remove on any attempt being made to subdue them."—*Henderson.* "There are many traces of the Rechabites at present. They live entirely isolated, will not be recognised, and shun, or, rather, hate, all intercourse and every connection with the other Jews. They only sojourn in Arabia, and for the most part on the western shores of the Red Sea, and are engaged solely in the raising of cattle. They are called *Arab Sebb*, or

in number: and you see thus the prophecy has been fulfilled,—Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever;' and saying this, Mousa, the Rechabite, mounted his horse, and fled away, and left behind a host of evidence in favour of sacred writ."[b]

6—11. (6) Jonadab, 2 Ki. x. 15. (7) build house, *etc.*, all these things are the signs of a settled life.[a] (8) obeyed, *etc.*, whether their father's injunction was, in itself, good and wise, or not, they had at least kept it faithfully. (9, 10) tents, which can readily be removed from place to place. (11) go to Jerusalem, for the security of its walls and defences. Syrians, or marauding bands of Aramæans, who took advantage of the insecurity of the country occasioned by the Chaldæan invasion.

Praise of wine.—A good sherris-sack hath a twofold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain, dries me there all the foolish, dull, and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes; which, delivered o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is, the warming of the blood, which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice; but the sherris warms it, and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extreme. It illumineth the face, which, as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners, and inland petty spirits, muster me all to their captain, the heart; who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage; and this valour comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it awork; and learning, a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till sack commences it, and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant; for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath, like lean, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and tilled, with excellent endeavour of drinking good, and good store of fertile sherris, that he has become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them should be, to forswear thin potations, and addict themselves to sack.[b]

12—15. (12, 13) my words, contrasted here with those of Jonathan. (14) rising early, the usual fig. for "earnestly." (15) all my servants, contrasting God's many messengers with this one lawgiver to the Rechabite. return ye, *etc.*, ch. xviii. 11. xxv. 5.[a]

Disobedience to God condemned (*vv.* 13, 14).—Let us consider this complaint—I. Simply. There is at this day—1. The same regard for the commands of men; 2. The same disregard for the commands of God. But let us consider the complaint more minutely—II. With its attendant aggravations. 1. The authority from which the different commands proceeded; 2. The commands themselves: 3. The manner in which they were enforced. Address—(1) Those who regard man, and not God; (2) Those who regard God, and not man; (3) Those who feel a united regard for both.[b]

The simplest learner a true scholar.—The uncombed, ragged

Arabs who keep the seventh day." — *Rabbi J. Schwartz.*
b Wolff.

a Diodorus tells us that the Nabatheans, for the preservation of their wandering habits, and thereby of their liberty, forbade any one "either to sow corn, or plant fruit trees, or drink wine, or build a house." "There, my lad," said an Athenian once to a little Hebrew boy, by way of joke, "here is a pruta (a small coin, of less value than a farthing), bring me something for it, of which I may eat enough, leave some for my host, and carry some home to my family." The witty boy went and brought him salt. "Salt," exclaimed the Athenian; "I did not tell thee to bring salt!" "Nay," replied the boy, archly, "didst thou not say, 'Bring me of what I may eat, leave, and take some home?' Verily of this thou mayest eat, leave some behind, and still have plenty to carry home."—*Medrash Ech.*
b Shakespeare.

a "I enjoined nothing unreasonable, but simply to serve Me, and I attached to the command a gracious promise, but in vain. If Jonadab's commands, wh. were arbitrary, and not moral obligations in themselves, were

obeyed, much more ought Mine, which are in themselves right."—*Fausset.*

vv. 13, 14. *A. Roberts*, vi. 58.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

c H. W. Beecher

a Pr. i. 24; Is. lxv. 12.

b "*Dr. Wolff* and *Sig. Pierotti* bear witness to the existence of a large tribe who represent themselves as the descendants of the Rechabites."—*Bib. Dict., Smith.*

vv. 18, 19. *Dr. M. Frank*, ii. 413; *W. Reading*, ii. 481; *H. Townson*, ii. 215; *J. H. Pott*, ii. 316; *Bp. Heber*, 275; *W. H. Mill*, 238; *J. W. Warter*, ii. 533.

c H. C. Cherry, M.A.

Many of the experiences of childhood are forgotten in after life, yet they all have had their influence; and this influence still exists, secretly controlling our lives.

little wretch that has hardly got off from the briny sea—having come from the Emerald Isle—and that goes into the mistress's school and begins to fumble the book, though he never saw the inside of a book before, and begins to learn, is a scholar just as much as the boy that is reaching out his hand to take his diploma and go to the next higher school. He is a scholar, though he has the bulk of his learning yet to acquire. And so it is with following Christ. Whoever will go to the Word of God, where four pictures open—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, whoever will read the life of Christ just as you would read the life of any other person, and follow that, he is a Christian.*c*

16—19. (16, 17) I will bring, nothing shall remove the threatened penalty.*a* (18) house, or representatives of the family of. (19) want a man, *i.e.* the race should not be permitted to die out.*b*

Obedience to parents (*vv.* 18, 19).—I. Endeavour to impress on the attention of the young the necessity for a strict obedience to the commands of their parents. II. As also for a general obedience, under the limitation of altered circumstances and times, to the institutions and customs of our forefathers. III. Show that it is much more our duty implicitly to respect and obey every command of God.*c*

Clasp of his mother's hand.—A Christian mother died with the hand of her little son clasped in her own. Years passed and the boy grew to manhood, reckless and abandoned in character. The memory of his mother's prayers, and of the lessons he had learned at her side, seemed to have faded away. From one excess of wickedness into another he plunged, until his cup of iniquity seemed full. Then, by the abounding mercy of God, he was snatched as a brand from the burning, and became a new creature in Christ. Speaking of his life of sin, he said that, hardened as he seemed, and indifferent to all things sacred, there never was a time when tempted to sin, that he did not feel the clasp of his dying mother's hand, drawing him from the paths of sin to the ways of holiness, with a force which he found it hard to resist. That mother, though dead, yet spoke.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

1—4. (1) fourth year, ch. xxv. 1. (2) roll, pieces of parchment sewn together so as to make a roll, having a piece of wood at each end.*a* write, *etc.*, *i.e.* he was to collect his prophecies, and make a permanent record of them.*b* days of Josiah, ch. xxv. 3. (3) may be, *etc.*, ch. xxvi. 3. hear, so as to act in a way to delay, if not remove, the judgment.*c* (4) Baruch, ch. xxxii. 12. 13, 16.

a Is. viii. 1; Eze. ii. 9; Zec. v. 1.

b We may assume that many of these prophecies had been previously written.

c "In such places God is introduced, as speaking after the manner of men, and using such methods as in human probability may be most likely to prevail."—*Lowth.*

The names of writing materials and their origins.—Amongst the materials upon which the ancient Scriptures were written, were skins, tanned, or dyed red or yellow. These were not bound by the edge, but so fastened together as to form one continuous roll; hence the word volume, from Lat. *volumen*, a roll. Some were written on prepared skins called parchments, so called from Pergamos, the place where parchment was first made. "Sometimes tables of wood or stone, called caudices, or codices, were employed, hence the term codex (Lat. tablet) came to be applied

to a manuscript on any material;" and hence also a system of laws was called a code, because the use of such tables was once frequent for legal purposes, where durability was important. "These tables were written on in their natural state (or, when used for temporary purposes, covered with wax) with an iron needle (Job xix. 24) called a *stylus;* hence we have the term style now applied to the style of the composition.

Exod. xxxii. 15; Deut. vi. 9; Isa. xxx. 8; Hab. ii. 2; Luke i. 63; 2 Cor. iii. 3.

5—10. (5) **shut up**, prob. in confinement or prison, though we have no record of Jer. being imprisoned in the days of Jehoiakim. It is possible that he was "shut up" by illness. (6) **fasting day**,[a] when the multitudes would be assembled in the temple-courts. (7) **supplication**, for pardon and mercy, accompanying this with the signs of true repentance. Heb. "supplication shall fall," as petitioners fall at the feet of a king in the E. (8, 9) **proclaimed a fast**, *i.e.* a special one, perhaps on account of the national calamities.[b] (10) **higher court**, the large court, where the general assembly of the people was held.

Thoughtful books—their value.—For my own part, I have ever gained the most profit, and the most pleasure also, from the books which have made me think the most; and when the difficulties have once been overcome, these are the books which have struck the deepest root, not only in my memory and understanding, but likewise in my affections. For this point, too, should be taken into account. We are wont to think slightly of that which it costs us a slight effort to win. When a maiden is too forward, her admirer deems it time to draw back. Whereas whatever has associated itself with the arousal and activity of our better nature, with the important and memorable epochs in our lives, whether moral or intellectual, is—to cull a sprig from the beautiful passage in which Wordsworth describes the growth of Michael's love for his native hills—

> "Our living being, even more
> Than our own blood, and—could it less?—retains
> Strong hold on our affections, is to us
> A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
> The pleasure which there is in life itself."

If you would fertilise the mind, the plough must be driven over and through it. The gliding of wheels is easier and rapider, but only makes it harder and more barren. Above all, in the present age of light reading, that is, of reading hastily, thoughtlessly, indiscriminately, unfruitfully, when most books are forgotten as soon as they are finished, and very many sooner, it is well if something heavier is cast now and then into the midst of the literary public. This may scare and repel the weak; it will rouse and attract the stronger, and increase their strength by making them exert it. In the sweat of the brow is the mind as well as the body to eat its bread.[c]

a The great day of expiation, wh. was kept upon the tenth day of the seventh month. Le. xxiii. 27, 29.

b Keil supposes this fast to have been held in commemoration of the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans in the previous year.

v. 6. *F. Fowle*, i. 1.

v. 8. *Dr. R. Burrowes*, 199.

"Books are faithful repositories, which may be awhile neglected or forgotten, but when they are opened again, will again impart their instruction. Memory once interrupted is not to be recalled; written learning is a fixed luminary, which, after the cloud that had hidden it has passed away, is again bright in its proper station. Tradition is but a meteor, which, if it once fails, cannot be rekindled."—*Johnson.*

c *Hare.*

11—15. (11) **son of Gemariah**, this Gemariah was the public scribe, or the secretary of state, but he had not been present at Baruch's reading. His son had no bad purpose in carrying the report to him. (12) **scribe's chamber**, or office of the secretary of state, prob. in the forecourt of the king's palace. **princes sat there**, holding a council of state. (13) **declared, etc., *i.e.*** recited the chief points. (14) **Jehudi**, his pedigree

a "The honourable treatment which Baruch meets with shows that the princes were favourably inclined towards him and Jeremiah."—*Spk Com.*

"As good almost

kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature—God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself—kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true no age can restore a life whereof, perhaps, there is no great loss; the revolutions of ages do not often recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of wh. whole nations fare the worse." —*Milton.*

b Lord Dudley.

indicates that he was of good family, but he was prob. a junior member of the council. (15) read . . ears, much of the substance of it was political, so of the utmost interest to them.[a]

Use of books.—Books are loved by some merely as elegant combinations of thought; by others as a means of exercising the intellect. By some they are considered as the engines by which to propagate opinions, and by others they are only deemed worthy of serious regard when they constitute repositories of matters of fact. But perhaps the most important use of literature has been pointed out by those who consider it as a record of the respective modes of moral and intellectual existence that have prevailed in successive ages, and who value literary performances in proportion as they preserve a memorial of the spirit which was at work in real life during the times when they were written. Considered in this point of view, books can no longer be slighted as fanciful tissues of thought, proceeding from the solitary brains of insulated poets or metaphysicians. They are the shadows of what has formerly occupied the minds of mankind, and of what once determined the tenor of existence. The narrator who details political events does no more than indicate a few of the external effects, or casual concomitants, of what was stirring during the times of which he professes to be the historian. As the generations change on the face of the globe, different energies are evolved with new strength, or sink into torpor; faculties are brightened into perfection, or lose themselves in gradual blindness and oblivion. No age concentrates within itself all advantages. The knowledge of what has been is necessary, in addition to the knowledge of the present, to enable us to conceive the full extent of human powers and capacities; or, to speak more correctly, this knowledge is necessary to enable us to become acquainted with the varieties of talent and energy with which beings of the same general nature with ourselves have, in past times, been endowed.[b]

16—19. (16) afraid, of the mischief they thought it would do to the people, disheartening them. tell the king, &c. of the political importance of these writings. (17, 18) tell us, *etc.*, before speaking to the king the princes were anxious to be assured that they were the very words of the recognised Prophet, Jeremiah. with ink, to intimate how entirely Baruch had been a mere agent. (19) hide thee,[a] &c. the princes too truly guessed the effect of such denunciations on so jealous a tyrant as Jehoiakim.

Influence of books.—Benjamin Franklin tells us, in one of his letters, that, when he was a boy, a little book fell into his hands, entitled *Essays to do Good*, by Cotton Mather. It was tattered and torn, and several leaves were missing. "But the remainder," he says, "gave me such a turn of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life! for I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good than any other kind of reputation: and, if I have been a useful citizen, the public owes all the advantages of it to the little book." Jeremy Bentham mentions, that the current of his thoughts and studies was directed for life by a single phrase that caught his eye at the end of a pamphlet: "The greatest good of the greatest number." There are single sentences in the New Testament that have awakened to spiritual life hundreds

a "Jeremiah being prob. only under house-arrest, would find no difficulty in availing himself of the advice given by the princes." —*Henderson.*

c. 18. Ink.—The Oriental ink is thicker than ours, and consists of lamp-black or charcoal mixed with gum and water. It is sold dry, in grains.

"Charles Lamb, tired of lending his books, threatened to chain Wordsworth's poems to his shelves, adding, 'For of those who borrow, some read slow; some mean to read,

of millions of dormant souls. In things of less moment, reading has a wondrous power. George Law, a boy on his father's farm, met an old, unknown book, which told the story of a farmer's son, who went away to seek his fortune, and came home, after many years' absence, a rich man. From that moment, George became uneasy, left home, lived over again the life he had read of, returned a millionnaire, and paid all his father's debts. Robinson Crusoe has sent to sea more sailors than the press-gang. The story about little George Washington telling the truth about the hatchet and the plum tree, has made many a truth-teller. We owe all the Waverley novels to Scott's early reading of the old traditions and legends: and the whole body of pastoral fiction came from Addison's sketches of Sir Roger De Coverley in *The Spectator*. But illustrations are numberless. Tremble, ye who write, and ye who publish writing. A pamphlet has precipitated a revolution. A paragraph quenches or kindles the celestial spark in a human soul, in myriads of souls.[b]

20—23. (20) laid . . roll, not venturing at first to show it to the king. (21) fetch the roll, being determined to see it for himself. stood, it seems that the king sat and the courtiers stood. (22) winterhouse, this is noticed to explain the presence of the fire.[a] ninth month, or December. on the hearth, or brazier.[b] (23) leaves, or columns. penknife, *lit.* "the secretary's knife," used for trimming the reed-pen. Jehoiakim acted in extreme temper.[c]

Jehoiakim's penknife (*v.* 23).—I. The use of the historical portions of Scripture is, that they represent to us embodied truth, and weave doctrine into the details of ordinary life. II. Christian parents should not let this and other instances of persons who have had godly parents dishearten them in their endeavour to train their children aright. III. Without literally mutilating the Word of God men may be practically guilty of the same act.[d]

The hearth.—The "hearth" here mentioned was in all probability the *tandoor* of the East, of which so full an account is given in Smith and Dwight's Travels in Armenia. "What attracted our attention most this stormy day, was the apparatus for warming us. It was the species of oven called *tannoor*, common throughout Armenia, and also in Syria, but converted here for purposes of warmth into what is called a *tandoor*. A cylindrical hole is sunk about three feet in the ground in some part of the room, with a flue entering it at the bottom to convey a current of air to the fire which heats it. For the emission of smoke no other provision is made than the open sky-light in the terrace. When used for baking bread, the dough, being flattened to the thickness of common pasteboard, perhaps a foot and a half long by a foot broad, is stuck to its smooth sides by means of a cushion upon which it is first spread. It indicates, by cleaving off, when it is done; and being then packed down in the family chest, it lasts at least a month in the winter and ten days in the summer. Such is the only bread known in the villages of Armenia; and even the cities of Erivan and Tebriz offer no other variety than a species perhaps only twice as thick, and so long that it might almost be sold by the yard. To bake it, the bottom of a large oven is covered with pebbles (except one corner where a fire is kept constantly burning), and upon them, but don't read; and some neither read nor mean to read, but borrow, to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say, that there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money, they never fail to make use of it.'" —*Tatford.*

b R. Bonkersley.

a "The great men had distinct houses or apartments, fitted for the several seasons of the year. Am. iii. 15."—*Lowth.*

b "In the East neither chimneys nor ovens are used, but, when the weather is cold, a pitcher of brass or iron, containing burning wood or charcoal, is used for the purpose of warming the chambers, and when the wood has burned to embers, a cover is placed over the pot to make it retain the heat." —*Henderson.*

c "As often as Jehudi read three or four columns, the king cut the piece he had read off, and threw it into the fire, until the entire roll was burnt." —*Pausset.*

vv. 21—24. *Bp. Medley*, 345.

v. 23. *T. Arnold*, iii. 317.

v. 24. *Dr. E. Payson*, ii 444; *H. Goodwin*, i. 222.

v. 22. Ninth

month. Kisleu or Chisleu, answering to our December. See *Bible Months*, pp. 132—136. The *fire on the hearth* was probably charcoal brought in in a brazier of metal.

d H. C. Mitchenson, M.A.

e Bush.

Trees of righteousness, the more they are shaken by the wind, the more they are rooted and grounded in Christ.

a 2 Ki. xxii. 11.

"The desirable treasure of wisdom and knowledge, which all men covet from the impulse of nature, infinitely surpasses all the riches of the world; in comparison with wh., precious stones are vile, silver is clay, and purified gold grains of sand; in the splendour of wh. the sun and moon grow dim to the sight; in the admirable sweetness of wh. honey and manna are bitter to the taste. The value of wisdom decreaseth not with time; it hath an ever-flourishing virtue that cleanseth its possession from every venom." — *Richard de Bury.*

b C. Clayton, M.A.

"Books may be helps to learning and knowledge, and make it more common and diffused; but I doubt whether they are neces-

when heated, the sheets of dough are spread. The convenience of such thin bread, where knives and forks are not used, and spoons are rare, is that a piece of it doubled enables you to take hold of a mouthful of meat more delicately than with your bare fingers; or, when properly folded, helps you to convey a spoonful safely to your mouth to be eaten with the spoon itself. When needed for purposes of warmth, the tannoor is easily transformed into a tandoor. A round stone is laid upon the mouth of the oven, when well heated, to stop the draught; a square frame about a foot in height is then placed above it; and a thick coverlet, spread over the whole, lies upon the ground around it, to confine the warmth. The family squat upon the floor, and warm themselves by extending their legs and hands into the heated air beneath it, while the frame holds, as occasion requires, their lamp or their food. Its economy is evidently great. So full of crevices are the houses, that an open fireplace must consume a great quantity of fuel, and then almost fail of warming even the air in its immediate vicinity. The tandoor heated once, or at the most twice, in twenty-four hours by a small quantity of fuel, keeps one spot continually warm for the relief of all numb fingers and frozen toes."[e]

24—26. (24) not afraid,[a] this refers to the king and his attendants, not especially to the princes who had brought the roll. (25) made intercession, or entreaty. (26) take, *i.e.* arrest and put in prison. This the princes had expected, *v.* 19.

Jeremiah's roll burnt (*v.* 24).—We learn hence—I. The importance of the written Word. II. The value of Divine ordinances. III. The Lord's object in the Scriptures. IV. The rebellion of the carnal mind. V. The folly of destroying God's Word. Apply:—1. Make known this Word to others; 2. Study it for our own comfort.[b]

Books and reading.—Of all the amusements which can possibly be imagined for a hard-working man, after his daily toil, or in its intervals, there is nothing like reading an entertaining book, supposing him to have a taste for it, and supposing him to have the book to read. It calls for no bodily exertion, of which he has had enough or too much. It relieves his home of its dulness and sameness, which in nine cases out of ten, is what drives him out to the alehouse, to his own ruin and his family's. It transports him into a livelier, and gayer, and more deversified and interesting scene; and while he enjoys himself there, he may forget the evils of the present moment, fully as much as if he were ever so drunk, with the great advantage of finding himself the next day with his money in his pocket, or at least laid out in real necessaries and comforts for himself and his family,—and without a headache. Nay, it accompanies him to his next day's work, and if the book he has been reading be anything above the idlest and lightest, gives him something to think of besides the mere mechanical drudgery of his every-day occupation.—something he can enjoy while absent, and look forward with pleasure to return to. But supposing him to have been fortunate in the choice of his book, and to have alighted upon one really good and of a good class. What a source of domestic enjoyment is laid open! What a bond of family union! He may read it aloud, or make his wife read it, or his eldest boy or girl, or pass it round from hand to hand. All have the benefit of it—all

contribute to the gratification of the rest, and a feeling of common interest and pleasure is excited. Nothing unites people like companionship in intellectual enjoyment. It does more, it gives them mutual respect, and to each among them self-respect —that corner-stone of all virtue. It furnishes to each the master-key by which he may avail himself of his privilege as an intellectual being to

> Enter the sacred temple of his breast,
> And gaze and wander there a ravished guest,
> Wander through all the glories of his mind,
> Gaze upon all the treasures he shall find.

And while thus leading him to look within his own bosom for the ultimate sources of his happiness, warns him at the same time to be cautious how he defiles and desecrates that inward and most glorious of temples.[c]

27—32. (27) after that, and in response to this act of public insult to God through His Prophet. (28) another roll, for man's wilfulness cannot be permitted to destroy God's Word.[a] (29) why, *etc.*, here is given the point which so greatly offended Jehoiakim. (30) dead . . heat, ch. xxii. 19. (31) punish, or visit his iniquity upon him. (32) like words, other prophecies of the same kind.[b] Jehoiakim's act "only made matters worse, for it tended to enlarge the bulk of the volume, and to aggravate its tidings of disaster."

Jehoiakim burns the sacred roll (*vv.* 27, 28).—The folly of this act was great as the impiety, and take occasion to notice— I. The enmity of man's heart against the Word of God. The same disposition may be shown in a variety of ways. 1. By denying the Divine authority of Scripture; 2. By explaining away all its fundamental truths: 3. By entertaining doubts of its utility to the poor; 4. By setting its precepts at defiance; 5. By reviling and persecuting those who embrace it. II. The folly of indulging it. 1. We cannot change one declaration in all the Scriptures; 2. We cannot prevent the execution of one threatening; 3. We accumulate on our own heads the judgments we despise. Learn—(1) To tremble at the Word ourselves; (2) To use all diligence to make it known to others; (3) To faithfully deal with those who pour contempt upon it.[c]

Eastern climate.—It may not be improper here to remark upon the wisdom and goodness of God displayed in the temperature of an Oriental sky. The excessive heats of the day, which are sometimes incommodious, even in the depth of winter, are compensated and rendered consistent with animal and vegetable life, by a corresponding degree of coolness in the night. The patriarch Jacob takes notice of this fact, in his expostulation with Laban: "By day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night." Mr. Bruce, in like manner, frequently remarks in his journey through the deserts of Senaar, where the heat of the day was almost insupportable, that the coldness of the night was very great. When Rauwolf travelled on the Euphrates, he was wont to wrap himself up in a frieze coat in the night-time, to defend himself from the frost and dew, which, he observes, are very frequent and violent there. Thevenot traversed the very fields where Jacob tended the flocks of Laban; and he found the heats of the day so intense, that although he wore upon his head a large black handkerchief after the manner of the Orientals

sary ones or no, or much advance any other science beyond the particular records of actions or registers of time; and these, perhaps, might be as long preserved without them, by the care and exactness of tradition in the long succession of certain races of men with whom they were entrusted."—*Temple.*

c Sir J. Herschel.

a "Here is a sublime specimen of the triumph of God's Word, when repressed by the power, and burnt by the rage of this world, whether it be in the suppression of the Scriptures, or in preventing their circulation, or in casting copies of them into the fire, or in the imprisonment and martyrdom of God's preachers. That Word rises more gloriously out of all its persecutions."—*Wordsworth.*

b "To consume the material volume was not to defeat the design of Him who had inspired it. For at once the Divine decree was issued for another roll to be written, not only omitting none of the heavy penalties of the consumed copy, but containing aggravated penalties, and making the assurances of impending judgment doubly sure."—*F. Jacox.*

c C. Simeon, M.A.

v. 32. *W. Reading*, iv. 115; *W. Jay*, vii. 63.

"The impression we feel from the scenery of autumn is accompanied with much exercise of thought; the leaves then begin to fade from the trees; the flowers and shrubs, with which the fields were adorned in the summer months, decay; the woods and groves are silent; the sun himself seems gradually to withdraw his light, or to become enfeebled in his power. Who is there who, at this season, does not feel his mind impressed with a sentiment of melancholy; or who is able to resist that current of thought which, from such appearances of decay, so naturally leads him to the solemn imagination of that inevitable fate which is to bring on alike the decay of life, of empire, and of nature itself?"—*Alison.*

d Paxton.

when they travel, yet his forehead was frequently so scorched, as to swell exceedingly, and actually to suffer excoriation: his hands being more exposed to the burning sun, were continually parched; and he learned from experience to sympathise with the toil-worn shepherd of the East. In Europe, the days and nights resemble each other, with respect to the qualities of heat and cold: but if credit be due to the representations of Chardin, it is quite otherwise in Oriental climates. In Lower Asia, particularly, the day is always hot; and as soon as the sun is fifteen degrees above the horizon, no cold is felt in the depth of winter itself; on the contrary, the nights are as cold as at Paris in the month of March. It is for this reason, that in Turkey and Persia they always used furred habits in the country, such only being sufficient to resist the cold of the night. Chardin travelled in Arabia and Mesopotamia, the scene of Jacob's adventures, both in winter and in summer, and attested on his return the truth of what the patriarch asserted, that he was scorched with heat in the day, and stiffened with cold in the night. This difference in the state of the air in twenty-four hours, is in some places extremely great, and according to that respectable traveller, not conceivable by those who have not seen it; one would imagine they had passed in a moment from the violent heats of summer to the depth of winter. Thus it has pleased a beneficent Deity to temper the heat of the day by the coolness of the night, without which, the greatest part of the East would be a parched and sterile desert, equally destitute of vegetable and animal life. This account is confirmed by a modern traveller. When Campbell was passing through Mesopotamia, he sometimes lay at night out in the open air, rather than enter a town, on which occasion he says, "I found the weather as piercing cold, as it was distressfully hot in the daytime." The same difference between the days and nights has been observed on the Syrian bank of the Euphrates; the mornings are cold, and the days intensely hot. This difference is distinctly marked in these words of the Prophet: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim, king of Judah: he shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost." So just and accurate are the numerous allusions of Scripture to the natural state of the Oriental regions; and so necessary it is to study with care the natural history of those celebrated and interesting countries to enable us to ascertain with clearness and precision the meaning, or to discern the beauty and force, of numerous passages of the sacred volume.[d]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

1—5. (1) Zedekiah, 2 Ki. xxiv. 17. (2) did hearken, more esp. to the advice to yield fully to the Chaldæans. (3) sent, *etc.*, during the interval of hope excited by news of the approach of the Egyptian army. (4) not . . prison, *i.e.* not yet. *see v.* 15. (5) departed, for a time raising the siege.[a]

Praying soldiers.—If there be any persons so thoughtless or foolish as to call this order "unmilitary," it will not be the Hindoos. The religion of the British soldier is a standing astonishment to his Sepoy comrade, who styles it the "once-a-

a Pharaoh Hophra, the Apries of Herodotus, was an ally of Zedekiah, but his intervention availed nothing. Whether, however, he withdrew without giving Nebuchadnezzar battle, or whether he was defeated, we do not know."—*Spk. Com.*

week *deen*." In front of his hut he himself has always the little "toolsee plant," which represents the wife of Shiva, and which he sedulously waters morning and evening. That Hindoo soldier must be a "budmash" indeed who does not say prayers before and after bathing at daybreak. Perhaps his solicitations at the altar of Shiva or Parvati are only for carnal things. Perhaps he prays only that he may be relieved from punishment drill, that he may gain a good-conduct stripe, that he may receive some more annas of pay, or that his wife may bear a boy who may come to be a havildar or even a jemadar. But the Hindoo, whatever his gods are like, believes in prayer; and the Mohammedan soldier also, when anything goes wrong, vows a bran-new green cloth to the shrine of the nearest saint, and spreads his praying carpet at the Azan—if there be no parade. The natives see with wonder the "*gora logue*"—the strong "white people"—take their religion like their washing, home once every seven days—and that, too, in military manner, like a regimental drill. One of their Mollahs, they tell you, was asked at what hour of the twenty-four "the faithful" need not trouble their heads about prayer to Allah, and his answer was "in the hour—which never comes—between the night and the day." Yet we call these people "heathens:" and doubtless the mumbled "Fathah," from the Koran, or the "Mantras" which a Rajpoot or Brahmin linesman mutters as he gets his tooth-stick and lota ready, are not very lofty specimens of the "voice of the heart." Still they are what they are, and the ear of Heaven is open, by whatever name its mercy and hope are invoked. Nor are those the worst soldiers who are often upon their knees. Hume tells us that on the eve of the battle of Hastings the Saxons spent the night in drinking mead and metheglin; but that the Normans passed it in silence and religious devotions, and went into battle singing the hymn of Roland. The psalm-singers had the best of it in the bloody struggles around the standard; and the Cavaliers, in spite of their chivalry, went down before those terrible fellows who marked the "fighting verses" in their Bibles with the blades of their swords. "Show me the men that pray," Gustavus Adolphus used to observe, "and I will show you those that you can't beat;" and we will be bound that the stout Highlander who grounded his arms at the door of Dum-Dum Church sooner than take part in a service which was against the grain of his conscience, never showed his back to an enemy, and never will.[b]

6–10. (6, 7) Pharaoh's . . land, *i.e.* their help will be of no practical value to you. (8) come again, *comp.* ch. xxi. 4–7.[a] (9, 10) wounded, *etc.*, a strong fig. to express the utter hopelessness of the conflict. Even the disabled men of Nebuc.'s army would suffice to take the city, and burn it to the ground.

The great advantage of obeying God.—Connect with past history of Israel, and the day's lesson. I. Had the nation been obedient, instead of invasion and oppression, they had had increasing peace: instead of sin and idolatry, their moral and religious excellence had abounded. II. But it applies to us also. 1. We have a picture of what our peace may be if we serve the Lord. Picture a river: at first narrow, gets broader: at first shallow, gets deeper: at first a babbling brook, full of little eddies, turns, etc., by-and-by a majestic river, flowing on without a sound or a

vv. 1–3. *S. C. Wilkes*, 49.

"As that storm roars the loudest which has been the longest gathering, so God's reckoning day with sinners, by being long coming, will be the more terrible when it comes." —*Guthrie.*

"Luther loved to fight on the deck of the Church's ship out on the high seas, against the fleet that came sailing from the ports of the enemy. Leighton preferred the peaceful toils of the fisherman, to mend the Church's nets under some shady rock, and to cast them out into the still waters for a draught of fishes. Luther's faith was more of the soldier's sword, and Leighton's more of the pilgrim's staff. The one was eager, like Peter; the other retiring, like John. But both were faithful servants, loved their Lord, and have long since embraced in heaven."—*J. Stoughton.*

b Daily Paper.

a "God has the sovereign command of all the hosts of men, even of those that know Him not, that own Him not, and they are all made to serve His purposes. He directs their marches, their counter-marches, their retreats, their returns, as it pleases Him; and furious

armies, like stormy winds, in all their motions are fulfilling His Word." — *Mat. Henry.*

b Hive.

"On piety humanity is built; and on humanity much happiness; and yet still more on piety itself. A soul in commerce with her God is heaven; feels not the tumults and the shocks of life; the whirls of passions, and the strokes of heart." — *Young.*

c H. W. Beecher,

ripple. 2. Our righteousness is also illustrated by waves of sea; ocean an image of infinitude: waves wash round all coasts; how much they cover, how much they bear up. Learn:—(1) All this depends upon obedience and trust: then peace with God, conscience, etc.; (2) Some hearken to the advice of others rather than commands of God: and what the result?[b]

Paternal relations of God.—We think it would be wrong to attribute to God such tender compassion as mothers feel; we shrink from transferring to God the interior and most exquisite passages of the history of the household, because it seems to us that there must be incompatibility between personal administration in the family and civil administration in a State government. But this is wrong; for we are to gain our conceptions of God Himself from the noblest faculties of man. We are to take the best thoughts and the best feelings of human beings, and from these we are to derive our highest views of God: and in doing this, every thought, every figure which we apply to Him, inclines us to take the family and its experiences as the source of information respecting Him. Those things that are furthest from animal life, and those things that indicate the most exquisite experiences of affection in the mother and in the father, are the very ones which we should transfer to God, and should believe that He possesses.[c]

11—15. (11) broken up, *marg.* "made to ascend;" gone up; the fig. intimates that they removed their siege-engines, and, as we say, raised the siege. (12) then, taking advantage of the openness of the country. separate himself, *marg.* "slip away from;"[a] or better, "to receive a share thence." (13) captain, *etc.*, or captain of the watch. took Jer., *i.e.* arrested him. fallest away, or as a spy you intend to give information to the Chaldæans. (14) false, still the character of his predictions had appeared to favour the Chaldæan cause, and we can hardly wonder that he was suspected. (15) prison . . house, the place reserved for political offenders.[b]

Treatment of prisoners.—The treatment of those that are shut up in the Eastern prisons differs from our usages, but serves to illustrate several passages of Scripture. Chardin relates several circumstances concerning their prisons, which are curious, and should not be omitted. In the first place, he tells us that the Eastern prisons are not public buildings erected for that purpose; but a part of the house in which their criminal judges dwell. As the governor and provost of a town, or the captain of the watch, imprisoned such as are accused in their own houses, they set apart a canton of it for that purpose, when they are put into these offices, and choose for the jailer the most proper person they can find of their domestics. Sir John supposes the prison in which Joseph, together with the chief butler and chief baker of Pharaoh, was put, was in Potiphar's own house. But I would apply this account to the illustration of another passage of Scripture: "Wherefore," it is said, Jer. xxxvii. 15, "the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison." Here we see a dwelling-house was made a prison: and the house of an eminent person, for it was the house of a scribe, which title marks out a person of quality: it is certain it does so in some places of Jeremiah, particularly ch. xxxvi 12, "Then he

a Allusion, however, may be to Jer.'s going, as others did, to fetch a store of provisions from the neighbouring country.

"When the siege was temporarily raised, the first object with everybody would be to obtain supplies of food, and accordingly Jeremiah *in the midst of the people, i.e.* accompanied by others, who, like himself, had a right to a share in the priests' produce at Anathoth, started thither to see whether any stores still remained which might be available for their common use."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Often in the E. part of the private house of a public officer serves as a prison."—*Faussct.*

went down into the king's house into the scribe's chamber, and lo, all the princes sat there, even Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah," etc. The making the house of Jonathan the prison, would not now, in the East, be doing him any dishonour, or occasion the looking upon him in a mean light; it would rather mark out the placing him in an office of importance. It is probable it was so anciently, and that his house became a prison, when Jonathan was made the royal scribe, and became, like the chamber of Elishama, one of the prisons of the people.[c]

16—21. (16) **dungeon**, or pit; an underground cell: ch. xxxviii. 6.[a] **cabins**, cells, vaults, arched cavities. **many days**, prob. till the Chaldæans had returned again. (17) **secretly**, or privately. The return of the Chaldæans had renewed the king's anxiety. **thou . . Babylon**, ch. xxxii. 3, 4, xxxiv. 2, 3. (18) **I offended**, the messages Jer. had given had not been his own. He had been but God's agent. (19) **not come**, this the false prophets had constantly said.[b] (20) **supplication**, *etc.*, for milder treatment. (21) **court**, not into the cell, or dungeon: a freer kind of custody. **bakers' street**, or quarter.[c]

Ovens.—In primitive times, an oven was designed only to serve a single family, and to bake for them no more than the bread of one day; a custom which still continues in some places of the East: but the increase of population in the cities, higher degrees of refinement, or other causes in the progress of time, suggested the establishment of public bakehouses. They seem to have been introduced into Judæa long before the captivity; for the Prophet Jeremiah speaks of "the bakers' street," in the most familiar manner, as a place well known. This, however, might be only a temporary establishment, to supply the wants of the soldiers assembled from other places to defend Jerusalem. If they received a daily allowance of bread, as is the practice still in some Eastern countries, from the royal bakehouses, the order of the king to give the Prophet daily a piece of bread, out of the street where they were erected, in the same manner as the defenders of the city, was perfectly natural. The custom alluded to still maintains its ground at Algiers, where the unmarried soldiers receive every day from the public bakehouses a certain number of loaves. Pitts indeed asserts, that the Algerines have public bakehouses for the accommodation of the whole city. The women prepare their dough at home, and the bakers send their boys about the streets, to give notice of their being ready to receive and carry it to the bakehouses. They bake their cakes every day, or every other day, and give the boy who brings the bread home, a piece or little cake for the baking, which is sold by the baker. Small as the Eastern loaves are, it appears from this account, that they give a piece of one only to the baker, as a reward for his trouble. This will perhaps illustrate Ezekiel's account of the false prophets receiving pieces of bread by way of gratuities: "And will ye pollute me among my people, for handfuls of barley, and pieces of bread?" These are compensations still used in the East, but of the meanest kind, and for services of the lowest sort.[d]

Christ receives all from God by His oneness with God; we receive all from Christ by our oneness with Him.

c Harmer.

a "That selected for Jer. appears to have been of a squalid description, consisting of a well, or pit, with vaults round the sides, in which the prisoners were lodged." — *Henderson.*

b Je. xxvi. 7, xxix. 1.

"The event hath now convinced you how much they have deceived you; for you see the siege renewed, and the city in imminent danger of being taken."—*Lowth.*

c "The streets in E. cities are generally distinguished fr. each other, not by the separate names which they bear, but by the sort of traffic or business carried on in them. The different branches of trade, instead of being intermixed, as with us, are usually assigned to a distinct locality."—*Hackett.*

If you lay the least weight on a rotten branch it breaks under it; so an unsound Christian cannot bear the least cross for Christ.

d Paxton.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) Shephatiah, *etc.*, for some of these names comp. ch. xxi. 1, 9, xxxvii. 3. (2) he that, *etc.*, ch. xxi. 9. (4) surely, so the defenders may cherish no hope of success.[a]

Life a river.—Pliny compares life to a river. The river, small and clear in its origin, gushes forth from rocks, falls into deep glens, and wantons and meanders through a wild and picturesque country; nourishing only the uncultivated tree or flower by its dew or spray. In this, in its state of infancy and youth, it may be compared to the human mind, in which fancy and strength of imagination are predominant: it is more beautiful than useful. When the different rills or torrents join, and descend into the plain, it becomes slow and stately in its motions, and able to bear upon its bosom the stately barge. In this mature state, it is deep, strong, and useful. As it flows on towards the sea, it loses its force and its motion, and at last, as it were, becomes lost and mingled with the mighty abyss of waters.[b]

4—6. (4) therefore, *i.e.* bec. Jer.'s messages utterly disheartened the soldiers: and he seemed to actually recommend their desertion to the enemy.[a] welfare, *lit.* "the peace." (5) in your hand, Zedekiah speaks despondingly, and as one who felt powerless to resist his chief officers.[b] (6) dungeon, ch. xxxvii. 16: a pit, or cistern, wh. had been full of water.[c] with cords, this gives indication of the depth and unwholesomeness. The princes hoped Jer. would die in the pit.

Prisons.—There were two prisons in Jerusalem; of which one was called the king's prison, which had a lofty tower that overlooked the royal palace, with a spacious court before it, where state prisoners were confined. The other was designed to secure debtors and other inferior offenders: and in both these the prisoners were supported by the public, on bread and water. Suspected persons were sometimes confined under the custody of state officers, in their own houses; or rather a part of the house which was occupied by the great officers of state, was occasionally converted into a prison. This seems to be a natural conclusion from the statement of the Prophet Jeremiah, in which he gives an account of his imprisonment: "Wherefore, the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison, in the house of Jonathan the scribe; for they had made that the prison." This custom, so different from the manners of our country, has descended to modern times; for when Chardin visited the East, their prisons were not public buildings erected for that purpose, but, as in the days of the Prophet, a part of the house in which their criminal judges reside. "As the governor, or provost of a town," says our traveller, "or the captain of the watch, imprison such as are accused, in their own houses, they set apart a canton of them for that purpose, when they are put into these offices, and choose for the jailer the most proper person they can find of their domestics." The royal prison in Jerusalem, and especially the dungeon, into which the prisoner was let down naked, seems to have been a most dreadful place. The latter cannot be better described than in the words of Jeremiah himself, who for his faithfulness to God and his country,

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a "Jer. would not have so often repeated this unwelcome message, but that he could put them in a certain way, though not to save the city, yet to save themselves; so that every man might have his own life given him for a prey if he would be advised."—*Mat. Henry.*

b *Sir H. Davy.*

a "Had Jer. not had a Divine commission he might justly have been accused of treason; but, having one, which made the result of the siege certain, he acted humanely as the interpreter of God's will under the theocracy, in advising surrender."—*Fausset.*

b "Zedekiah in his pusillanimity gives up Jeremiah to the princes, as Pilate gave up Christ to the chief priests."—*Wordsworth.*

c "Every house in Jerus. was supplied with a subterranean cistern, so well constructed that we never read of the city suffering in a siege from want of water."—*Spk. Com.*

"To see sad sights moves more than to hear them told; for then the eye interprets to the ear the heavy motion that it doth behold;

in a most degenerate age, had to encounter all its horrors: "Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon that was in the court of the prison: and they let him down with cords; and in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: and his feet sunk in the mire." A discretionary power was given to the keeper to treat his prisoners as he pleased; all that was expected of him being only to produce them when required. If he kept them in safe custody, he might treat them well or ill as he chose: he might put them in irons or not; shut them up close, or indulge them with greater liberty; admit their friends and acquaintances to visit them, or suffer no person to see them. The most worthless characters, the most atrocious criminals, if they can bribe the jailer and his servants with large fees, shall be lodged in his own apartment, and have the best accommodation it can afford; but if he be the enemy of those committed to his charge, or have received larger presents from their persecutors, he will treat them in the most barbarous manner.[d]

7—9. (7) **Ebed-melech**, prob. keeper of the royal harem.[a] **Ethiopian**, Heb. *Cushite.* **sitting in the gate**, where causes were usually heard. It was the king's duty to sit there, as a magistrate, for a certain time every day. (8, 9) **like to die**,[b] likely to do; will be sure to die. **no more bread**, private stores were consumed; and nobody was likely to think of the poor prophet.

Black eunuchs.—The possession of black eunuchs is not very common in the Levant; they are hardly anywhere to be found, except in the palaces of the sovereign, or of the branches of the royal family. When the Baron De Tott's wife and mother-in-law were permitted to visit Asma Sultana, daughter of the Emperor Achmet, and sister of the reigning prince, he tells us, that "at the opening of the third gate of her palace, several black eunuchs presented themselves, who, with each a white staff in his hand, preceded the visitors, leading them to a spacious apartment, called the chamber of strangers." He adds, that to have such attendants is a piece of great state, as the richest people have not more than one or two of them.[c]

10—13. (10) **thirty men**, not so much for defence, as the indication that he came by the king's authority. Had he gone alone, the princes might have thought he was only doing his own will. (11) **cast clouts**,[a] rags of torn garments. **rotten rags**, pieces of worn-out garments.[b] (12) **under armholes**, to ease the strain of lifting Jer. up out of the well. (13) **in the court**, still in custody, but not in peril of his life.

Prison of the condemned.—

Apart from hence, involved in deeper gloom,
Frowns in dark state, "Fate's dreaded anteroom!"
But oh! what hand can raise the sable screen
That veils the horrors of the "final scene;"
To the shock'd sight the dismal cells expose,
Where death-doom'd felons wait life's awful close!
Where, as the night-clock strikes, the culprits hear
The tread of death, at every stroke more near;
And with the daybreak, startled fancy eyes
Before their view the fatal scaffold rise!
Yet deem not vainly, in these dreary cells,

when every part a part of woe doth bear; 'tis but a part of sorrow that we hear. Deep sounds make lesser noise than shallow fords; and sorrow ebbs, being blown with wind of words."—*Shakespeare.*

d Paxton.

a "Eunuchs of the present day, to whom the charge of harems is committed, are mostly from Nubia or Abyssinia."—*Michaelis.*

b Lit. "he is dead in his place;" the language of fear of the worst.

c Harmer.

a A.-S. *clūt.* A piece of cloth, etc., used for a patch.

b "This thoughtful act of the negro shows his kindliness, the depth of the cistern, that force would be necessary in pulling out Jeremiah, and therefore that the mire was deep, and possibly that Jeremiah was enfeebled by his privations, and required gentle treatment."—*Spk. Com.*

"So we'll live, and pray, and

sing, and tell old tales, and laugh at gilded butterflies; and hear poor rogues talk of court news, and we'll talk with them too; who loses and who wins, who's in, who's out, in a wall'd prison packs and sets of great ones, that ebb and flow by th' moon." — *Shakespeare.*

c Halloran.

With guilt that sorrow or contrition dwells;
Or through the conscious walls, as Echo flies,
Her voice repeats repentant groans or sighs!
Oh no! e'en here by terrors unsubdued,
By death unawed Vice pens her blackest brood;
Here the short hours, which penitence should claim,
Are blindly wasted in some sinful game.
Gaming, of fraud and infamy the source,
By long indulgence gains resistless force;
While "sentenced wretches" hug the insatiate vice,
And madly stake their souls upon the dice!
Here 'demon fury" every sense appals,
And shakes with impotence of rage the walls,
To swell the dreadful scene, while all around
The clanking chains in mournful concert sound.[c]

14—16. (14) third entry, or innermost entrance from the palace into the Temple.[a] a thing, or a word, a prophetic intimation as to the result of the siege. (15) hearken, so as to follow out the advice I give. (16) sware secretly, being too weak to take a decided and open course.[b]

A prison.—

A prison is in all things like a grave,
Where we no better privileges have
Than dead men; nor so good. The soul, once fled,
Lives freer now than when she was cloister'd
In walls of flesh; and though the organs want
To act her swift designs, yet all will grant
Her faculties more clear, now separate,
Than if conjunction, which of late
Did marry her to earth, had stood in force,
Incapable of death or of divorce:
But an imprison'd mind, though living, dies,
And at one time feels two captivities:
A narrow dungeon, which her body holds,
But narrower body which herself enfolds.[c]

17—19. (17) go forth, and give thyself up as prisoner. soul live, or thy life shall be spared. (18) given into, as a conquered city. thou . . hand, ch. xxxix. 5. (19) lest they, *i.e.* the Chaldæans. mock me, for deserting at last, only when it was too late to save the city.

Life and death.—

Reflect that life and death, affecting sounds
Are only varied modes of endless being;
Reflect that life, like every other blessing,
Derives its value from its use alone:
Not for itself, but for a nobler end
The Eternal gave it; and that end is virtue.
When inconsistent with a greater good,
Reason commands to cast the less away:
Thus life, with loss of wealth, is well preserved,
And virtue cheaply saved with loss of life.[a]

20—23. (20) only obey, all will then come right. (21) this is the word, viz., that both Zed. and the city would be taken. (22) women, of the court. These would be taken as

a "The third passage or gate which lay between the king's palace, where the prison was, and the Temple, whither the king now retreated for fear of the Chaldæan army."—*Lightfoot.*

b "Zedekiah is an example of that moral cowardice which is the bane and destruction of many, esp. in courts." — *Wordsworth.*

vv. 14—20. *J. Jowett, Lect.* 154.

c Bishop King.

vv. 19, 20. *J. Milner*, iii. 485.

"As flowers always wear their own colours and give forth their own fragrance every day alike, so should Christians maintain their character at all times and under all circumstances."—*H. W. Beecher.*

a Dr. Johnson.

a "The Prophet now informs Zed. that if he refused

prey by the Chaldæan officers, and they would reprove Zedekiah for following bad advice.[a] thy friends, *comp.* Obad. 7. they . . back, *i.e.* the friends in whom Jer. trusted would forsake him in the hour of need. (23) thou shalt cause, *i.e.* the harder fate of the city shall be the consequence of thine obstinancy.[b]

How we are linked together.—You remember the touching story of the daughter of Sir Robert Peel. Her father gave her, as a birthday present, a gorgeous riding habit, and went out with her on the same day for an airing in the park, his heart swelling with parental pride as he rode by her side. Shortly afterwards, she sickened and died of typhus fever of the most malignant type: and when inquiry was made as to how she caught the infection, it was discovered that the habit, bought from one of the London West End tradesmen, had been made in a miserable attic, where the husband of the seamstress was lying ill of fever, and that it had been used by her to cover him in his shivering fits. Thus, whether we will believe it or not, the safety of the highest is bound up with the condition of the lowest.[c]

24—28. (24) no man know, throughout the interview Zed. shows himself to be utterly weak. (25) the princes, whom Zed. so greatly feared, and who would find in this interview a new occasion against Jer. (26) Jonathan's house, ch. xxxvii. 15. (27) the matter, *i.e.* the advice to desert to the Chaldæans, which Jer. had so earnestly given to the king. (28) court, ch. xxxix. 21.

Race for life.—

For life—the victim's utmost speed
Is mustered in this hour of need:
For life—for life—his giant might
He strains, and pours his soul in flight;
And mad with terror, thirst, and pain,
Spurns with wild hoof the thundering plain.
'Tis vain; the thirsty sands are drinking
His streaming blood—his strength is sinking:
The victor's fangs are in his veins—
His flanks are streaked with sanguin'd strains—
His panting breast in foam and gore
Is bath'd—he reels—his race is o'er;
He falls—and with convulsing throe,
Resigns his throat to th' ravening foe!
And lo! ere quivering life has fled,
The vultures, wheeling o'erhead,
Swoop down, to watch, in gaunt array,
Till the gorged tyrant quits his prey.[a]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-NINTH.

1—3. (1) ninth year, 2 Ki. xxv. 1, 2; Je. lii. 4.[a] (2) eleventh year, the siege lasted just one year and six months. broken up, or such breaches were made in the walls as gave the invaders possession of the city. (3) middle gate, that wh. separated the city of Zion from the lower town. Rab-mag, prob. the official title of the second *Sharezer*, meaning, "Chief of the magicians," the sacerdotal caste of Chaldæa.[b]

to submit, he would become the object of more cutting derision on the part of his own mistresses, who, in order the more to gratify their new lords, would exult over his fallen condition."—*Henderson.*

b "It shall be thine own act, as completely as if done with thine own hand."—*Spk. Com.*

c *Rev. W. N. Taylor.*

"Few men have done more harm than those who have been thought to be able to do least; and there cannot be a greater error than to believe a man whom we see qualified with too mean parts to do good, to be, therefore, incapable of doing hurt. There is a supply of malice, of pride, of industry, and even of folly, in the meekest, when he sets his heart upon it, that makes a strange progress in wickedness."—*Lord Clarendon.*

a *Pringle.*

a "After his expedition to Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar himself seems to have retired to Riblah in the land of Hamath, to the north of

Palestine explorations.—A large number of valuable and important identifications are newly advanced or supported in the last *Quarterly Statement* of the Exploration Fund. Among them comes, first, and most important, the site of Bethabara, the place where John baptised; the name is still preserved in one of the many previously unknown fords of the Jordan discovered in the course of the survey. It is illustrative of the value of the new map that it will show no fewer than fifty of these fords, against eight in the best map at present existing. The "Tower of Ader," the site of Jacob's camp, is proposed to be identified with the "Shepherd's Plain," near Bethlehem. Lieut. Conder proposes sites also for the "Valley of Blessing" and the town of Bezeth; he has traced Pilate's Aqueduct to its conclusion, and furnishes an accurate survey of Tell Jezer, where M. Ganneau found the now famous inscription marking the ancient Levitical boundaries. The number contains, also, a drawing of the mountain where Lieut. Conder found the "Altar of Ed;" an account of the recent excavations in Jerusalem conducted by the Germans; of the discoveries and excavations in connection with the First Wall of the city by Mr. Henry Maudslay; and important papers by Major Wilson and Captain Warren, the latter giving his reconstruction of the Temple of Herod. The survey party are now in Philistia; the total amount of work done up to the present is nearly 4,000 square miles.

4—7. (4) fled, from the upper city. Even in the hour of extremity Zed. would not follow Jer.'s advice, and submit. fled, 2 Ki. xxv. 4—12.[a] plain, or wilderness of Judæa. (5) gave judgment, pronounced his sentence. (6) slew, *etc.*, Zed.'s punishment was specially terrible bec. of the stubbornness of his resistance. (7) put out . . eyes, a cruel but not unusual punishment.[b]

Putting out the eyes.—By an inhuman custom, which is still retained in the East, the eyes of captives taken in war are not only put out but sometimes literally scooped or dug out of their sockets. This dreadful calamity Samson had to endure, from the unrelenting vengeance of his enemies. In a posterior age, Zedekiah, the last king of Judah and Benjamin, after being compelled to behold the violent death of his sons and nobility, had his eyes put out, and was carried in chains to Babylon. The barbarous custom long survived the decline and fall of the Babylonian empire, for by the testimony of Mr. Maurice, in his History of Hindostan, the captive princes of that country were often treated in this manner by their more fortunate rivals; a red-hot iron was passed over their eyes, which effectually deprived them of sight, and at the same time of their title and ability to reign.[c] Extinction of the sight was not allowed as a punishment under the Mosaic law, but was commonly employed in the East against such as were in a position to have engaged in plots against the existing government, Judg. xvi. 28; 2 Kings xxv. 7; Ezek. xii. 13. The same punishment was frequently employed by the Normans in our own land, and was inflicted by William II. upon his brother Robert. In the seventeenth century, a silver style, resembling those used for painting the eyebrows, was heated red-hot, and thrust into the eyes of one of the Persian princes, for the purpose of destroying sight. The late Pasha of Acre, Achmed, called Djezzar, or the Butcher, subjected his

Palestine, on the right bank of the river Orontes, about 35 miles N.E. of Baalbec, on the great road between Palestine and Babylonia." — *Wordsworth.*

b "It was customary among the Chaldæans to give the names of their idols, as an additional title, or mark of honour, to persons of distinction."—*Lowth.*

a "They took to flight by the double wall wh. ran along the south side of Zion, and reached the point whence two roads struck off, the one to Bethlehem, and the other across the south side of the Mount of Olives. They appear to have taken the latter route in order to reach the Jordan, having crossed wh. they might have escaped into Arabia Deserta."—*Henderson.*

b Comp. Je. xxxii. 4; Eze. xii. 14.

"Possibly he was deprived of sight by having a red-hot iron held before his eyes." —*Michaelis.*

"The Assyrian sculptures depict the delight with which the kings struck out, often with their own hands, the

attendants to the most shameful cruelties ; many of them had lost an eye, or ear, or an arm ; others had their noses slit : nor were any means of redress open to them. The same wicked custom still prevails. Mr. Roberts, speaking of this practice, says. "The eyes of many were plucked out by hooks ; others had the sight destroyed by powerful drugs ; and some had their eyelids sewn together. as is the custom with hunting hawks." [c]

eyes of captive princes."—*Faussel.*

c Paxton.

8–10. (8) burned, even as Jer. had foretold.[a] see also ch. lii. 12. 13. (9) captain .. guard, or chief marshal. remnant, those left from the first deportation conducted by the conquering princes. Prob. Nebuzaradan had been left in charge of the conquered city. fell to him, or deserted to him. (10) poor, poss. the disabled, who would only encumber his journey, and could do no mischief if left behind.

Peter the Great.—The soldiers of Peter the Great, the Czar of Muscovy, were no sooner masters of the town of Narva, than they fell to plundering and committing the most enormous barbarities. The Czar ran from place to place to put a stop to the disorder and massacre. He even turned upon his own victorious but ungovernable troops, and threatened them with instant death if they did not immediately desist from rapine and slaughter, and allow quarter to their vanquished foes. He actually killed with his own hands several Muscovites who did not obey his orders.[b]

a "The fate of the city was delayed for a month, probably until definite instructions had been received from Nebuchadnezzar.

We live amid surfaces, and the art of life is to skate well on them.

b Percy Anec.

11–14. (11) charge, instructions how to treat the Prophet.[a] (12) take him, secure his personal safety. and pay him every attention. (13) Compare the names with those in *v.* 3. (14) Gedaliah, ch. xxvi. 24. He was the chief of the deserters to the Chaldæans. home, prob. to Gedaliah's home. dwelt .. people, as a freeman.

Trials of a prisoner.—A prisoner is an impatient patient, lingring under the rough hands of a cruell phisitian ; who having come to his disease, knowes his complainte, and hath power to cure him, but takes more pleasure to kill him. He is like Tantalus, who hath freedome running by his doore, yet cannot enjoy the least benefit thereof. His greatest griefe is that his credit was so good and now no better. His land is drawne within the compasse of a sheepe's skin, and his owne hand the fortification that barres him of entrance : hee is fortunes tossing-bal, an object that would make mirth melancholy : to his friends an abject, and a subject of nine dayes' wonder in euery barber's shop, and a mouthful of pitty (that he had no better fortune) to midwiues and talkatiue gossips : and all the content that this transitory life can giue him seems but to flout him, in respect the restraint of liberty barres the true. To his familiars hee is like a plague, whom they dare scarce come nigh for feare of infection ; he is a monument ruined by by those which raysed him ; he spends the day with a *hei mihi! væ miserum!* and the night with a *nullis est medicabilis herbis.*[b]

a "No doubt he had been informed that the Prophet had exhorted both king and people to submit themselves to his authority." —*Lowth.*

"How like a prison's to a grave! when dead we are with solemn pomp brought thither, and our heirs, masking their joy in false dissembled tears, weep o'er the hearse : but the earth no sooner covers the earth brought thither, but they turn away with inward smiles, the dead no more remember'd : so enter'd into a prison."—*Massinger.*

b Sir Thomas Overbury.

15–18. (15) while .. prison, but after Ebed-melech had rescued him from the pit. (16) before thee, the intimation that Ebed should see the evil, and live through it. (17) deliver thee, as a recognition of his services to God's Prophet. afraid, Ebed might well fear the wild slaughter and rioting that is usual when a city is sacked. (18) for a prey, or an unexpected and unlooked for gain.[a]

a "The 'life' which he had risked in rescuing the Prophet was to be his reward, being spared beyond all hope when

the lives of his enemies should be forfeited."—*Fausset.*

Je. xxi. 9, xxxviii. 2.

"For love of all the gods, let's leave the hermit pity with our mother; and when we have our armours buckled on, let venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords."—*Shakespeare.*

Glories of liberty.—

O! Liberty! Liberty! who would not die,
In thy records to live eternally?
Oh Liberty! Liberty! thine is the wreath
That flames o'er the scene of a warrior's death;
Hallows the sod of the soldier's grave,
And plays o'er the land of the good and the brave,
Though the mighty come forth in their pride,
And nations be swept from the land,
For ever the names of thy patriot band
In the volume of fame shall abide.
Like Sicily's mountain whose fires never die,
Thy presence on earth is confest;
A beacon of wrath when it flames on high,
And a mighty fear when at rest.
Like thee it wakes from its terrible sleep,
And o'er the dark rock and green valley sweep.[b]

b *C. Edwards.*

CHAPTER THE FORTIETH.

1—6. (1) from Ramah, ch. xxxi. 15.[a] He had been carried, with other prisoners, to Ramah, a short distance from Jerusalem. chains, or manacles. At first Jer. was mixed up with the other captives, who were bound together with chains on the hands. (2) Lord, *etc.*, this sounds like a repetition of Jer.'s words, which may have been reported to the captain. (3) brought it, to pass. (4) loose thee, so give thee thy personal liberty. look well, ch. xxxix. 12. (5) while .. back, or while he was hesitating.[b] (6) Gedaliah, ch. xxvi. 24, xxxix. 14. Mizpah, in Benjamin, 2 hours N.W. of Jerusalem.

a "Prob. all the prisoners of note, who might be worth taking to Babylon, were collected at Ramah indiscriminately, and examined there."—*Spk. Com.*

b "From the signs of hesitation which Jer. manifested, the captain concluded that he would rather remain in the land than go to Babylon, and not only sent him to Gedaliah, but provided him with victuals for his journey, and dismissed him with a present."—*Henderson.*

Luther.—Disinterestedness was a leading feature in the character of Luther: superior to all selfish considerations, he left the honours and emoluments of this world to those who delighted in them. The following extract, from a will he executed some years before his death, proves how little he regarded that wealth to attain which thousands sacrifice every enjoyment in this life, and every hope of happiness in the next. The reformer says, "Lord God! I give Thee thanks that Thou hast willed me to be poor upon earth, and a beggar. I have neither house, land, money, nor possessions of any kind, which I can leave. Thou hast given me a wife and children: I commend them to Thee: nourish them, teach them, preserve them, as Thou hast hitherto preserved me, O Father of the fatherless, Judge of the widow!" The poverty of this great man did not arise from wanting the means of acquiring riches; for few men have had it in their power more easily to obtain them. The Elector of Saxony offered him the produce of a mine at Sneberg; but he nobly refused it, "lest" said he, "I should tempt the devil, who is lord of these subterraneous treasures, to tempt me." The enemies of Luther were no strangers to his contempt for gold. When one of the popes asked a certain cardinal, why they did not stop that man's mouth with silver and gold: his eminence replied, "That German beast regards not money!" It may easily be supposed, that the liberality of such a man would often exceed his means. A poor student once telling him of his

"It is no unusual thing for men of the most abandoned character to be struck with profound awe, and restrained from their vile purposes, by the presence of an eminently pious person. There is a power in real godliness which commands the reverence of

poverty, he desired his wife to give him a sum of money; and when she informed him they had none left, he immediately seized a cup of some value, which accidentally stood within his reach, and giving it to the poor man, bade him go and sell it, and keep the money to supply his wants. In one of his epistles, Luther says, "I have received one hundred guilders from Taubereim; and Schartts has given me fifty: so that I begin to fear lest God should reward me in this life. But I declare I will not be satisfied with it. What have I to do with so much money? I gave half of it to P. Priorus, and made the man glad."[c]

7—12. (7) **in the fields**, or scattered over the wilder parts of the country.[a] (8) **came to**, to offer their allegiance and service to him. **Netophathite**, fr. Netophah, a town in Judah.[b] **Maachathite**, from Maachathi, at the foot of Mt. Hermon.[c] (9) **fear not**, these officers would naturally fear that Gedaliah might deliver them as captives to the Chaldæans. **serve . . Babylon**, *comp.* Jer.'s advice, ch. xxvii. 11, xxix. 7. (10) **to serve**, *lit.* "stand before."[d] **come unto us**, *i.e.* whose officers will come with the king's commands and requirements. **gather**, *etc.*, there would be fruit on the trees, though no corn in the fields. (11) **in Moab**, *etc.*, *i.e.* seeking shelter in neighbouring lands. (12) **Mizpah**, *v.* 6. There Gedaliah seems to have had his residence.

Affliction endears the promises.—We never prize the precious words of promise till we are placed in conditions in which their suitability and sweetness are manifested. We all of us value those golden words, "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee," but few if any of us have read them with the delight of the martyr Bilney, to whom this passage was a stay, while he was in prison awaiting his execution at the stake. His Bible, still preserved in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, has the passage marked with a pen in the margin. Perhaps, if all were known, every promise in the Bible has borne a special message to some one saint, and so the whole volume might be scored in the margin with mementoes of Christian experience, every one appropriate to the very letter.[e]

13—16. (13) **Johanan**, *v.* 8. (14) **Baalis**, an ally of Zedekiah's.[a] **slay thee**, *Heb.* "strike thee in soul," *i.e.* a deadly stroke.[b] (15) **I will slay**, privately assassinate. (16) **falsely**, so Gedaliah, in his over-trustfulness, thought.

Murder.—The Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, after travelling at one time, toward the end of the week, from Portmoak to the banks of the Forth, on his way to Edinburgh, was, with several others, prevented by a storm from crossing that frith. Thus obliged to remain in Fife during the Sabbath, he was employed to preach, it is believed, in Kinghorn. Conformably to his usual practice, he prayed earnestly in the morning for the Divine countenance and aid in the work of the day; but suddenly missing his note-book, he knew not what to do. His thoughts, however, were directed to the command, "Thou shalt not kill;" and having studied the subject with as much care as the time would permit, he delivered a short sermon on it in the forenoon. Having returned to his lodging, he gave strict injunctions to the servant that no one should be allowed to see him during the interval of

those who hate it; and this the proudest sinners often so far feel as to be unable to carry on their violent opposition against it, while yet no saving change is effected upon them."—*Robinson.*

c R. T. S.

a "The leaders of the Jewish army had been scattered throughout the country on the capture of Zedekiah, in order to escape the notice of the Chaldæans."—*Fausset.*

b 2 Sa. xxiii. 28.

c De. iii. 14.

d "To be their representative, and to do their will, and also to mediate with them in your behalf."—*Hitzig.*

"Fire, and hammer, and file are necessary to give the metal form; and it must have many a grind and many a rub ere it will shine; so, in trial, character is shaped, and beautified, and brightened."—*S. Coley.*

e C. H. Spurgeon.

a Je. xxvii. 3.

b This Ishmael, being of the seed royal of David, envied Gedaliah, who had the presidency to wh. he thought himself entitled. Therefore he leagued himself with the ancient enemy of Judah.

"Foul deeds will rise, though all the earth o'erwhelm them to men's eyes: for murder, though it have no

tongue, will speak with most miraculous organ." — *Shakespeare.*

"And wither'd murder, alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf, whose howl s his watch, thus with his stealthy pace, with Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design moves like a ghost." — *Shakespeare.*

"Evil into the mind of god or man may come and go, so unapproved, and leave no spot or blame behind."—*Milton.*

worship. A stranger, however, who was also one of the persons detained by the state of the weather, expressed an earnest desire to see the minister; and having with difficulty obtained admittance, appeared much agitated, and asked him, with great eagerness, whether he knew him, or had ever seen or heard of him. On receiving assurance that he was totally unacquainted with his face, character, and history, the gentlemau proceeded to state that his sermon on the sixth commandment had reached his conscience; that he was a *murderer;* that being the second son of a Highland laird, he had some time before, from base and selfish motives, cruelly suffocated his elder brother, who slept in the same bed with him; and that now he had no peace of mind, and wished to surrender himself to justice, to suffer the punishment due to his horrid and unnatural crime. Mr. Erskine asked him if any other person knew anything of his guilt. His answer was, that so far as he was aware, not a single individual had the least suspicion of it; on which the good man exhorted him to be deeply affected with a sense of his atrocious sin, to make an immediate application to the blood of sprinkling, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; but at the same time, since, in providence, his crime had hitherto remained a secret, not to disclose it, or give himself up to public justice. The unhappy gentleman embraced this well-intended counsel in all its parts, became truly pious, and maintained a friendly correspondence with Mr. Erskine in future life.[c]

c *Whitecross*

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIRST.

1—3. (1) seventh month, fr. this it appears that Gedaliah's presidency lasted only two months.[a] eat bread, wh. is the Eastern sign of friendship. (2) then arose, *i.e.* even in the very midst of the banquet. (3) slew, *etc.*, Gedaliah's death being the signal for a general massacre, but it was confined prob. to the men of war.

The warning.—In former days, when a military company was to be called out, the notice delivered to each of the members was called "the warning." An officer, who was a Christian, having given the warning to a young man, was playfully accosted by another young man, who was not a member of the company, with the question, "Have you not a warning for me too?" The officer replied, "Yes, I have a warning for you: I warn you to flee from the wrath to come." This unexpected reply proved an arrow from the Lord's quiver; and to it the young man ascribes his conversion.

a 2 Ki. xxv. 8, 25.

Probably the happiest period in life most frequently is in middle age, when the eager passions of youth are cooled, and the infirmities of age not yet begun; as we see that the shadows, which are at morning and evening so large, almost entirely disappear at midday."—*Dr. Arnold.*

4—7. (4) no man knew, *i.e.* beyond the town of Mizpah. (5) Shechem, or Sychar, mod. Nablous.[a] Shiloh, ch. vii. 12.[b] Samaria, the chief town of the ten tribes. beards shaven, a sign of deep sorrow. cut themselves, Le. xix. 27, 28; De. xiv. 1.[c] (6) weeping . . went, in utter hypocrisy. come to Gedaliah, speaking as if he were a court-official. (7) slew them, the reason for this treacherous murder does not appear.

Boring the tongue.—At Chinsurah, in the East Indies, there is a famous place of resort called *Suraishortollah*, or the residence of the Bull-god. This is a square area, on which, beneath the shade of one vast banyan tree, several temples stand, dedicated

a Jno. iv. 5.

b Some think should be *Salem*, close to Shechem.

c "The persons here spoken of belonged to the remainder of the ten tribes, who had retained their veneration for the God of their fathers, and

to several popular idols, to accommodate all classes of comers. Here many self-inflicted or self-chosen cruelties are practised by those who thus hope to merit a place in the Hindoo heaven. A favourite penance is to have the tongue bored through with a large iron spike. A blacksmith is the operator, who is said to be very skilful both in driving a nail and driving a bargain. It sometimes happens that the candidates for this piece of service at his hands are so numerous and impatient, that they are obliged to submit to be arranged in order as they arrive, and wait till each in his turn can be gratified with a wound in the unruly member, which they use, meanwhile, with no small eloquence, to induce him to hasten to their relief, and when he is come, to get the business done as cheaply as they can. The shrewd knave, however, is wise enough to take his time, and extort a larger or a smaller fee, according to the number, rank, or fanaticism of his customers.[d]

prob. were in the habit of repairing at stated seasons to Jerus. The plight in which they now appeared was indicative of deep mourning on account of the destruction of that city."—*Henderson.*

d Cheever.

8—10. (8) we have treasures,[a] a very politic plea. These men knew that hidden stores of provisions would be important to Ishmael, and their secret would be lost with them if he put them to death. (9) it which Asa made, *see* 1 Ki. xv. 22. A large cistern would be necessary for the supply of the fortress. (10) captive, intending to set up a petty kingdom under the shelter of the Ammonites.

Granaries in the East.—In Palestine wells or cisterns are used for grain. In them the farmers store their crops of all kinds after the grain is threshed and winnowed. They are cool and perfectly dry. The top is hermetically sealed with plaster, and covered with a deep bed of earth; and thus they keep out rats, mice, and even ants—the latter by no means a contemptible enemy. The custom is doubtless an ancient one, and is extended from this country through the Carthaginians of North Africa into Spain. They seem to be alluded to in the passage cited above. These cisterns not only preserve the grain and other stores deposited in them from insects and mice, but they are admirably adapted to conceal them from robbers. These ten men had doubtless thus hid their treasures, to avoid being plundered in that time of utter lawlessness; and in a similar time I found people storing away grain in cisterns far out in the open country between Aleppo and Hamath; and they told me it was to hide it from the Government tax-gatherers. It is quite dangerous to come upon a deserted site full of these open cisterns and wells, especially at night, as I have often found. Frequently they are entirely concealed by the grass, and the path leads right among them. They must always be dug in dry places, generally on the side of a sloping hill. They would not answer in a wet country, but in these dry climates stores have been found quite fresh and sound many years after they were thus buried.[b]

a "Subterranean storehouses for keeping grain safe from robbers." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 8. "This refers to stores they had concealed, as is clear from the mentioning of 'the oil and honey.' During the time of the Kandian war many prisoners received lenient treatment, because of the assurance that they had treasures hid in the field, and that they should be the property of their keepers. In some cases there can be no doubt there were large sums thus acquired by certain individuals."—*Roberts.*

b Dr. Thomson.

11—14. (11) Johanan, ch. xl. 13: the man who had warned Gedaliah. (12) great waters, a large open pool, 2 Sa. ii. 13. Gibeon, four miles N.W. of Jerus., on the road from Mizpah to Ammon. (13) glad, at the prospect of deliverance. (14) cast about, turned round.

Recaptures.—In the year 1760, the ship *Good Intent*, from Waterford, was taken by a French privateer off Ushant, who took out all the crew, except five men and a boy, over whom they

"The wise and good wish well to liberty, throughout all lands; but aim to win her cause by some bold manly movement from the heart of

all united nations; not by base assassin's craft, of hangman's well repaid. But how to gain this, how to inaugurate this grand concerted blessing, seems a knot time's wearied fingers work at till they bleed; and baffled races vainly pray for. Still the riddle must be read. The hour must come when retributive Mercy shall succeed her sterner sister Justice, and aye reign in parity divine with righteous love."—*Bailey.*

placed nine Frenchmen. While navigating the vessel to France, four of the English formed the design of regaining possession of the vessel. One Brien tripped up the heels of the Frenchman at the helm, seized his pistol, and discharged it at another: making at the same time a signal to his three comrades below to follow his example: they did so, and soon overcame them, the Frenchmen crying for quarter. None of the British sailors could either read or write, and were quite ignorant how to navigate the vessel; but Brien steered at a venture, and arrived safe at Youghall, in Ireland, in the gaol of which place he lodged his prisoners. In 1794, the *Betsey*, of London, in her return from Jamaica, parted from her convoy in the Gulf of Florida, and was captured off the Lizard by a French frigate. The captain and crew, with the exception of the mate, carpenter, cook, and boy, and Mrs. Williams, a passenger, were taken out of the *Betsey* by the Frenchmen, and a lieutenant and thirteen men put on board to take charge of the prize. Three days after, the ship being driven by heavy gales of wind in sight of Guernsey, a plot was laid for securing the Frenchmen, and retaking the ship. Mrs. Williams counterfeited being ill, on purpose to draw the attention of the lieutenant, while the cabin-boy removed the fire-arms, etc. This being effected, she prepared herself with extraordinary resolution for the event. At eleven o'clock at night, when the lieutenant was asleep in his berth, and others of the French were between deck, in the fore part of the ship, the signal was given, and Mrs. Williams locked the lieutenant in the cabin, and stood at the door with a pistol in her hand, to prevent its being opened by force. In the meantime, the French on deck were thrust down the fore hatchway by the three men. A fine breeze brought them into Cowes Road in twelve hours; and Mrs. Williams was found standing sentinel, with a pistol in her hand, at the cabin-door, when a boat's crew went on board. Thus, by the spirited exertions of a woman and three brave fellows, a ship and cargo, worth £20,000, was rescued from the enemy.[a]

[a] *Percy Anec.*

15—18. (15) escaped, fleeing at once, scarcely even showing fight, but losing two of his party. (16) took Johanan, he becoming the leader on the death of Gedaliah. (17) Chimham, Heb. *Geruth-chemhoham*, poss. a caravanserai belonging to Chimham, near Bethlehem.[a] (18) because of the Chaldæans,[b] who would certainly take vengeance for the murder of the governor whom they had appointed.

[a] 2 Sa. xix. 38, 40.

[b] "Lest the Chaldæans should suspect all the Jews of being implicated in Ishmael's treason, as though the Jews sought to have a prince of the house of David."—*Fausset*

Certainty of judgment.—There was a man who committed a foul murder in a Scottish castle upon a young bridegroom, at whose marriage festivities he had hypocritically assisted. The assassin took horse in the dead of night, and fled for his life through wood and winding path. When the sun dawned, he slackened his pace, and behold! he was emerging from a thicket in front of the very castle whence he had fled, and to which, by tortuous paths, he had returned. Horror seized him; he was discovered, and condemned to death. So, however far and fast we may fly, we shall find ourselves, when light returns, ever in presence of our sin and of our Judge.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SECOND.

1—3. (1) **came near**, sought an audience to ask counsel in the time of perplexity. (2) **unto Jeremiah**, who poss. was one of the captives taken away by Ishmael. (2) **supplication**, *etc.*, as ch. xxxvi. 7. **thy God**, intimating that he had prevailing power with Him. (3) **show us the way**, the prayer sounds right and good, but it does not seem to have been offered in sincerity.[a]

Note on v. 2.—The margin has this, "Let our supplication fall before Thee." "O my lord," says the suppliant, "let my prayers be prostrate at your feet." "O forget not my requests, but let them ever surround your feet." "Allow my supplications to lie before you." "Ah! give but a small place for my prayers." "At your feet, my lord, at your feet, my lord, are all my requests."[b]

4—6. (4) **heard**, ch. xxxiv. 10, xxxv. 17. (5) **between us**, or against us. (6) **we will obey**, good promises followed by bad performances.[a]

Patience in prayer.—How many courtiers be there that go a hundred times a year into the prince's chamber, without hope of once speaking with him, but only to be seen of him. So must we come to the exercise of prayer purely, and merely to do our duty, and to testify our fidelity. If it please His Divine Majesty to speak, and discourse with us by His holy inspirations and interior consolations, it will be doubtless an inestimable honour to us, and a pleasure above all pleasures; but if it please Him not to do us this favour, leaving us without so much as speaking to us, as if He saw us not, or as if we were not in His presence, we must not for all that go our way, but continue with decent and devout behaviour in the presence of His Sovereign Goodness: and then infallibly our patience will be acceptable to Him, and He will take notice of our diligence and perseverance; so that another time, when we shall come before Him, He will favour us, and pass His time with us in heavenly consolations, and make us see the beauty of holy prayer.[b]

7—12. (7) **ten days**, he had to wait for this time before the answer came. The delay may have been necessary to allay the panic, and quiet the people. They had impulsively promised obedience in the time of excitement. (8—10) **still abide**, settling down quietly under the power of the Chaldeans, **repent**, ch. xviii. 11. (11, 12) **I . . mercies**, by overruling the King of Babylon's plans concerning you.

Bricks.—If their bricks, in those hot and dry countries, are in general only dried in the sun, not burnt, there is some reason to be doubtful whether the Hebrew word *malben* signifies a brick-kiln, as multitudes besides our translators have supposed. The bricks used in the construction of the Egyptian canals, must have been well burnt: those dried in the sun could have lasted no time. But bricks for this use could not have been often wanted. They were not necessary for the building those treasure cities which are mentioned Exod. i. 11. One of the pyramids is built with sun-dried bricks, which Sir J. Chardin tells us are durable,

a "They profess great reverence for Jeremiah, as for God; but will not hearken to the one or the other, but prefer their own wilfulness to both."—*Wordsworth.*

b Roberts.

a "It is the constant method of hypocrites to pretend a profound submission to the will of God till that comes to cross their inclinations or interest."—*Lowth.*

vv. 5, 6. *J. Fawcett*, iii. 308.

"Among all the graces that adorn a Christian soul, like so many jewels of various colours and lustres, against the day of her espousals to the Lamb of God, there is not one more brilliant than patience."—*Bp. Horne.*

b Sales.

Posidonius, in his Life of Augustine, relates, that the good man, going on one occasion to preach at a distant town, took with him a guide to direct him in the way. This man, by some unaccountable means, mistook the usual road, and fell into a by-path. It afterwards proved, that in this way the preacher's life had been saved,

as his enemies, aware of his journey, had placed themselves in the proper road with a design to kill him.

a Harmer.

as well as accommodated to the temperature of the air there; which last circumstance is, I presume, the reason they are in such common use in these very hot countries. There must then be many places used in the East for the making bricks, where there are no kilns at all; and such a place, I apprehend, the word *malben* signifies; and it should seem to be the perpetual association of a kiln and of the places where bricks are made with us in the West that has occasioned the word to be translated brick-kiln. The interpretation I have given best suits Jer. xliii. 9. The smoke of the brick-kiln, in the neighbourhood of a royal Egyptian palace would not have agreed very well with the Eastern cleanliness and perfumes.[a]

13—16. (13, 14) Egypt, seeking shelter there was the plan generally favoured. see no war, as yet the battle had not been carried into Egypt. (15) sojourn there, seeking the protection of its king rather than the protection of God. (16) overtake you, ch. xliv. 14, 18.[a]

Wild Arabs.—The deserts that lie between Egypt and Syria are at this day terribly infested by the wild Arabs. "In travelling along the sea-coast of Syria, and from Suez to Mount Sinai," says Dr. Shaw, "we were in little or no danger of being robbed or insulted; in the Holy Land, and upon the isthmus between Egypt and the Red Sea, our conductors cannot be too numerous." He then goes on to inform us, that when he went from Ramah to Jerusalem, though the pilgrims themselves were more than six thousand, and were escorted by four bands of Turkish infantry, exclusive of three or four hundred *spahees* (cavalry), yet were they most barbarously insulted and beaten by the Arabs. This may lead us, perhaps, to the true sense of the preceding words, "And he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment." It signifies, that just as a person appearing to be a shepherd, passed unmolested in common by the wild Arabs; so Nebuchadnezzar, by his subduing Egypt, shall induce the Arab tribes to suffer him to go out of that country unmolested, the possession of Egypt being to him what a shepherd's garment was to a single person: for though, upon occasion, the Arabs are not afraid to affront the most powerful princes, it is not to be imagined that conquest and power have no effect upon them. "They that dwell in the wilderness," says the Psalmist, referring to these Arabs, "shall bow before him," whom he has described immediately before, "he having dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," and which he unquestionably supposes was the great inducement to that submission. Thus the Arab that was charged with the care of conducting Dr. Pococke to Jerusalem, after secreting him for some time in his tent, when he took him out into the fields, to walk there, put on him his striped garment; apparently for his security, and that he might pass for an Arab. So D'Arvieux, when he was sent by the consul of Sidon to the camp of the grand emir, equipped himself for the greater security exactly like an Arab, and accordingly passed unmolested and unquestioned.[b]

17—19. (17) all the men, for a limitation of this denunciation, comp. ch. xliv. 14, 28. (18) execration, *etc.*, ch. xxiv. 9. (19) admonished you, or testified against you.[a]

a "What our hearts are most set on often prove fatal to us. Those who think to escape troubles by changing their place will find them wherever they go."—*Fausset.*

"Even as a mother o'er her children bending yearns with maternal love: her fond embraces and gentle kiss to each in turn extending, one at her feet, one on her knee she places, and from their eyes, and voice, and speaking faces, their varying wants and wishes comprehending, to one a look, to one a word addresses, even with her frowns a mother's fondness blending; so o'er us watches Providence on high, and hope to some and help to others lends, and yields alike to all an open ear, and when she seems her favours to deny, she for our prayers alone the boon suspends, or, seeming to deny, she grants the prayer."—*Filicaja.*

b Burder.

a "The Jews going into Egypt for protection,

The worst punishment of sin is the wrath to come.—The pirate Gibbs, whose name was for many years a terror to commerce with the West Indies and South America, was at last taken captive, tried, condemned, and executed in the city of New York. He acknowledged, before his death, that when he committed the first murder, and plundered the first ship, his compunctions were severe, conscience was on the rack, and made a hell within his bosom. But after he had sailed for years under the black flag, his conscience became so hardened and blunted that he could rob a vessel and murder all its crew, and then lie down and sleep as sweetly at night as an infant in its cradle. His remorse diminished as his crimes increased. So it is generally. If, therefore, remorse in this life is God's way of punishing crimes, the more men sin the less He punishes them! How absurd!

20—22. (20) dissembled, *see vv.* 3, 5, 6. (21, 22) not obeyed, as you so faithfully promised, and even swore to do.

Present age suitable to hypocrisy.—There was an age of chivalry, when no craven courted knighthood, for it involved the hard blows, the dangerous wounds, the rough unhorsings, and the ungentle perils of the tournament; nay, these were but child's play: there were distant Eastern fields, where Paynim warriors must be slain by valiant hands, and blood must flow in rivers from the Red-cross knights. Then men who lacked valour preferred their hawks and their jesters, and left heroes to court death and glory on the battle-field. This genial time of peace breeds carpet knights, who flourish their untried weapons, and bear the insignia of valour, without incurring its inconvenient toils. Many are crowding to the seats of the heroes, since prowess and patience are no more required. The war is over, and every man is willing to enlist. When Rome commenced her long career of victory, it was no pleasant thing to be a soldier in the Roman legions. The power which smote the nations like a rod of iron abroad, was a yoke of iron at home. There were long forced marches, with hunger and cold and weariness; heavy armour was the usual load when the legionary marched at ease; but "ease" was a word he seldom used. Rivers were forded; mountains were scaled; barbarians were attacked: proud nations were assailed; kingdoms were subdued. No toil too stern for the scarred veteran, no odds too heavy, no onslaught too ferocious, no arms too terrible. Scarcely were his wounds healed, ere he was called to new fields: his life was battle: his home the tent; his repast was plunder; his bed the battle-field; while the eagle's bloody talons removed all need of sepulchre for his slaughtered body. But afterwards when Rome was mistress of the world, and the Prætorian cohorts could sell the imperial purple to the highest bidder, many would follow the legions to share their spoils. It is not otherwise to-day. Into the triumphs of martyrs and confessors few are unwilling to enter; in a national respect to religion, which is the result of their holiness, even ungodly men are willing to share. They have gone before us with true hearts valiant for truth, and false traitors are willing to divide their spoils."[a]

was in effect refusing to submit themselves to the king of Babylon, to whom God had decreed the government of Judæa, and all the neighbouring countries."—*Lowth.*

v. 20. *Dr. J. Orton,* i. 282; *T. Gisborne,* i. 173.

"Ottocar, King of Bohemia, refused to do homage to Rodolphus I., till at last, chastised with war, he was content to do him homage privately in a tent; which tent was so contrived by the emperor's servants, that, by drawing a cord, all was taken away, and and so Ottocar presented on his knees, doing his homage, to the view of three armies then in the field. Thus God at last shall uncase the closest dissembler to the sight of men, angels, and devils; having removed all veils and pretences of religion and piety."—*Spencer.*

A Christian with Christ may be safe and happy in the stocks, in the prison, or even in the den of lions.

[a] *C. H. Spurgeon.*

CHAPTER THE FORTY-THIRD.

1—4. (1, 2) Azariah, *comp.* ch. xlii. 1. proud, or presumptuous,[a] self-willed men. "Who refused to obey Almighty God, when His commands crossed their inclinations. (3) setteth thee on, Baruch was Jeremiah's friend, and belonged to the party that was prepared to submit to Babylon. He belonged therefore to the rival political party. (4) dwell . . Judah, abide quietly under Chaldæan sway.

Argument against sinning (*v.* 4).—I. That God denounces sin with abhorrence. Three things show sin to be an abomination. 1. The misrepresenting conduct of the sinner: 2. The universal conscience of mankind; 3. The history of the Divine conduct towards our world. II. That God hates sin with intensity. 1. For its deformity; 2. For its confusion: 3. For its misery. III. God prohibits sin with carnestness. 1. Hence those who sin war against their own highest interest; 2. Against the well-being of the creation; 3. Against God.[b]

5—7. (5) remnant, ch. xl. 11, 12. (6) men, *etc.*, comp. xli. 16. (7) Tahpanhes, ch. ii. 16, in the northern frontier of Egypt,[a] which was nearest to Palestine.

Discontent cured.—All human situations have their inconveniences. We *feel* those that we find in the present; and we neither feel nor see those that exist in another. Hence we often make troublesome changes without amendment, and frequently for the worse. In my youth I was a passenger in a little sloop descending the river Delaware. There being no wind, we were obliged, when the tide was spent, to cast anchor and wait for the next. The heat of the sun on the vessel was excessive—the company strangers to me, and not very agreeable. Near the river side I saw what I took to be a pleasant green meadow, in the middle of which was a large shady tree, where, it struck my fancy, I could sit and read—having a book in my pocket—and pass the time agreebly until the tide turned. I therefore prevailed with the captain to put me ashore. Being landed I found the greatest part of my meadow was really a marsh; in crossing which, to come to my tree, I was up to my knees in mire; and I had not placed myself under its shade five minutes before musquitoes in swarms found me out, attacked my legs, hands, and face, and made my reading and my rest impossible; so that I returned to the beach, and called for the boat to come and take me on board again, where I was obliged to bear the heat I had strove to quit, and also the laugh of the company. Similar cases in the affairs of life have since frequently fallen under my observation.[b]

8—13. (8, 9) great stones, as large as he could carry. hide . . clay, or plaster them over, building a sort of dais for a king. entry, *etc.*, as Eastern palace grounds were very extensive, this may have been at some distance from the palace itself.[a] (10) my servant, ch. xxv. 9. set . . hid, a symbolical declaration that he should surely conquer the country. pavilion, or the canopy of his throne. (11) death to death, ch. xv. 2; Zec. xi. 9. (12) fire, the destructive agent used by conquerors. array himself,[b] a strong fig. to indicate absolute possession of

a Ps. xix. 13.

"He who will fight the devil at his own weapon must not wonder if he finds him an over-match." —*South.*

Christ has promised all that pertains to life, and He is "the way" to it.

b Dr. Thomas.

a Je. xlvi. 14; Eze. xxx. 18. They that are not content with their present condition are like little children upon a hill; and they look a good way off, and see another hill, and think, if they were on the top of that, then they were able to touch the clouds with their fingers; but, when they are on top of that hill, alas! they are as far from the clouds as before. So it is with many who think another condition would give them happiness, but, when the desired position is attained, find themselves as far from contentment as before.
b Franklin.

a "Poss. the palace of Pharaoh was being built or repaired at this time; hence arose the mortar and brick kiln at the entry."—*Fausset.*

b "He shall invest the land of

the land. (13) images, statues. Beth-shemesh, *i.e.* "the house of the Sun," or Heliopolis, or On.

Clay.—The words appear to allude to embedding stones in clay and baking them, rendering it almost impossible to recover them; and the lesson conveyed is, that it is in vain to seek safety by disobeying God's commands. His wrath will follow sinners into all their false refuges, and destroy them and their hiding-places together. Clay was used at a very early period for making bricks. The bricks of which the tower of Babel was built were of clay, baked by fire, Gen. xi. 3; but those afterwards made by the Israelites, under their cruel taskmasters, were dried in the sun, Exod. v. 13. The more common materials, however, were, and still are, *unburned bricks*. Of these the pyramids of Egypt were constructed. They are composed of "clay, mud, and straw, slightly blended and kneaded together, and afterwards baked in the sun. The straw which keeps these bricks together, and still preserves its original colour, seems to be a proof that these bricks were never burned or made in kilns." There are many passages of Scripture explained by remembering that the reference is to unburned bricks, as Ezek. xiii. 11; Zech. ix. 3; Isa. xxx. 13, etc. The pigeon-houses of Egypt were constructed of crude bricks, pottery, and mud, and placed on the roofs of the huts; to this the Psalmist may allude, Psa. lxvii. 13. The waterpots at Cana (John ii. 6) were probably of this material. Mr. Wilson says, while he was sitting by the well of Cana, six females, each carrying a waterpot on her head, came to the well to get water. "These vessels are formed of clay, hardened by the heat of the sun, of globular shape, and large at the mouth, not unlike the bottles commonly called carboys used in our country for holding vitriol and other acids." He adds that these vessels hold about the same quantity as those spoken of by the Evangelist—three firkins, or about twelve gallons each. Temptations, difficulties, and afflictions are likened to miry clay, Psa. xl. 2. The Slough of Despond, of which Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, speaks, was a pit of miry clay. The man who maketh riches his trust, or acquires them unjustly, is likened to a man who loadeth himself with thick clay—it will avail him nothing, but will be a trouble to him. Hab. ii. 6. The doors of the granary of Joseph in Egypt are kept carefully sealed, but not with wax. The inspectors put their seal upon a handful of clay, with which they cover the lock of the door, Job xxxviii. 14. Official letters were sealed with mud or clay, and the patriarch may allude to this custom. Some such seals are to be seen in the British Museum.

Egypt, and take entire possession of it, just as a shepherd's garment covers his body all over. So calamities, when they surround men on every side, are compared to a garment. Ps. cix. 19.—*Lowth.*

"With as great ease as a shepherd throws his cloak round him when going forth to watch his flock by night in the open field, so easily shall the king of Babylon take possession of all the wealth and glory of Egypt, and throw it round him, and depart without any one daring to resist his progress."—*Spk. Com.*

"The truest definition of evil is that which represents it as something contrary to nature; evil is evil, because it is unnatural: a vine which should bear olive berries, an eye to which blue seems yellow, would be diseased; an unnatural mother; an unnatural son; an unnatural act, are the strongest terms of condemnation."—*F. W. Robertson.*

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FOURTH.

1–6. (1) dwell, better, *sojourn*. These Jews expected soon to return to Judæa. Migdol, a city on the eastern frontier of Egypt,[a] towards the Red Sea. Tahpanhes, ch. ii. 16. Noph, Memphis, now Cairo. Pathros,[b] or Upper Egypt. (2) seen, are eye-witnesses of the fulfilment of My threatened judgments. (3) went to burn, "implying perverse assiduity." serve other gods, *comp.* De. xiii. 6, xxxii. 17. (4) sent . . prophets, ch. vii. 13, xxv. 4. (5) inclined their ear, to listen with a view to obedience. (6) poured forth, ch. xlii. 18.

[a] Ex. xiv. 2; Nu. xxxiii. 7.
[b] Is. xi. 11; comp. Ge. x. 14.
"In noble consistency with that unbending determination to do his duty which had marked Jeremiah's whole life, and undeterred

by the recent violence of the Jews, who had dragged him into Egypt against his will, we find him boldly rebuking the tendencies to idolatry, which seem to have grown only the stronger in their tribulation."—*Sp. Com.*

c G. Brooks.

a Comp. Nu. xvi. 38; Pr. viii. 36; Je. vii. 19.

"God designed that this remnant should have kept possession in Judæa, when the rest of their brethren were carried away captive. But by their going into Egypt, and defiling themselves with the idolatries of that nation, they have provoked God to make an utter destruction of them."—*Lowth.*

b 1 Ki. xi. 1–8, xv. 13, xvi. 31.

c Job xxii. 9; Is. xix. 10.

"Oh, how will crime engender crime! throw guilt upon the soul, and, like a stone cast on the troubled waters of a lake, 'twill form in circles, round succeeding round, each wider than the first."—*Colman.*

d Brooks.

a "The totality here spoken of must be confined to those who had

The abominable thing (*v.* 4).—I. Sin is an abominable thing, if we consider it—1. In reference to God: 2. In reference to the moral law: 3. In reference to its fatal influence on man. II. Sin is an abominable thing which God hates. 1. He has shown it in the expulsion of the rebel angels from heaven; 2. In the exile of our first parents from Eden; 3. In the prevalence of disease and death among men; 4. In a long series of recorded judgments; 5. In the cross of Christ. III. Sin is an abominable thing which God hates, and which He therefore exhorts and entreats us not to commit. 1. By the Bible; 2. By conscience; 3. By affliction.[c]

7—10. (7) to cut off, *i.e.* to certainly bring on yourselves the overwhelming judgments of the God whom you offend.[a] (8) begone, of your own accord, and in your own wilfulness. (9) their wives, it seems, from the history, that the Jewish queens were great promoters of idolatry.[b] land of Judah, which was sacred to Jehovah. (10) humbled, or contrite.[c]

Neglect of past warnings (*vv.* 9, 10).—"Have ye forgotten," etc. I. It was their duty to recollect the lessons taught by the past. II. They were not unwilling to recall the past glories of Israel. III. They ought to have remembered the connection between former sins and their punishment (see margin), in the light of God's unchanging justice. IV. Such remembering of the past, duly improved, had saved from present and future misery. Apply:—Present times.

Memory: a warning voice.—A gracious soul remembers that man was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath-day. He remembers how Saul lost two kingdoms at once—his own kingdom and that of heaven—for sparing Agag and the fat of the cattle. He remembers how the unprofitable servant, for the non-improvement of his talent, was cast into outer darkness. He remembers how Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead suddenly for telling a lie. He remembers how Lot's wife, for a look of curiosity, was turned into a pillar of salt. He remembers how Adam was cast out of Paradise for eating forbidden fruit, and the angels cast out of Heaven for not keeping their standing. He remembers that Jacob smarted for his lying to his dying day. He remembers how God followed him with sorrow upon sorrow, and breach upon breach, filling up his days with grief and trouble. He remembers how Moses was shut out of the Holy Land, because he spake unadvisedly with his lips. He remembers the young prophet who was slain by a lion, for eating a little bread, and drinking a little water, contrary to the command of God, though he was drawn thereunto by an old prophet, under a pretence of a revelation from heaven. He remembers how Zacharias was stricken dumb, because he believed not the report of the angel Gabriel. He remembers how Uzza was stricken dead for supporting the ark, when it was in danger of falling; nor can he forget the fifty thousand men of Bethshemesh, who were slain for looking into the ark; and the remembrance of these things stirs up his hatred and indignation against the least sins.[d]

11—15. (11) set . . evil, Am. ix. 4. all Judah, all the idolaters: *v.* 28 intimates that some of this remnant did return from Egypt.[a] (12) remnant of Judah, those are distinctly

marked out who had sought shelter in Egypt in opposition to the commands of the Prophet. (13) punish, *comp.* ch. xlii. 15—18. (14) none . . escape, *i.e.* none but those mentioned in *v.* 28. (15) had burned, better, "did burn."

The frown of God (*v.* 11).—I. The smile of God, the token of His favour, brightens all nature and life, "Thy favour is life," etc. II. The frown of God, the token of His displeasure, casts a shadow on the heart and life. Apply—1. To those who enjoy God's smile, live in it, reflect it; 2. To those who have forfeited it, seek reconciliation through Christ.

The secret of happiness.—Some time since I took up a little work, purporting to be the lives of sundry characters, as related by themselves. Two of these characters agreed in saying that they were never happy until they ceased striving to be great men. The remark struck me, as you know the most simple remark will, when God pleases. It occurred to me at once, that most of my sorrows and sufferings were occasioned by my unwillingness to be the nothing that I am, and by a constant striving to be something. I saw that if I would but cease struggling, and be content to be anything or nothing, as God pleases, I might be happy.[b]

16—19. (16, 17) goeth . . mouth, referring to certain vows wh. they had made.[a] queen of heaven, ch. vii. 18, xix. 13. "To the moon and the rest of the host of heaven." had we plenty, "fools attribute their seeming prosperity to God's connivance at their sin."[b] (18) wanted all, been starving and suffering. (19) cakes, ch. vii. 18. without our men, or husbands. The thing was done with their full approval;[c] therefore our vow must stand.

The impiety of ungodly men (*vv.* 16, 17).—I. The impiety of that people. 1. Their voluntary engagements: 2. Their deliberate violation of them; 3. Their self-vindicating effrontery. II. The resemblance that exists between them and us. Look at—1. The profane sinner; 2. The self-righteous formalist; 3. The hypocritical professor. III. The certain issue of such conduct. 1. How did it fare with them? 2. How will it fare with you? Address—1. Those who disregard our testimony; 2. Those who tremble at the word of God.[d]

The new moon.—When the new moon is first seen, the people present their hands in the same form of adoration, and take off the turban, as they do to other gods. If a person have a favourite son or wife, or any friend with whom he thinks himself fortunate, he will call for one of them on that night, and, after looking at the new moon, will steadfastly look at the face of the individual. But if there be no person of that description present, he will look at his white cloth, or a piece of gold.[e]

20—23. (20) the women, who evidently had taken a prominent position in arranging the answer to be given to the Prophet. (21) remember them, *i.e.* the various idolatrous acts. (22) no longer bear, even Divine patience being outworn by long-continued wilfulness and disobedience.[a] (23) sinned . . Lord, not merely in idolatrous acts, but in the cherished spirit of disobedient wilfulness.[b]

The cause of national adversity (*v.* 23).—I. Indicate some form and features of national adversity. II. Point out some of the

contumaciously refused to listen to the Prophet, and, after they had gone thither, had conformed to the idolatries of the country. The others may have removed thither under different circumstances."—*Henderson.*

b Payson.

a Comp. Nu. xxx. 12; De. xxiii. 23; Ja. xi. 36. "They appeal to their rash and impious vow as an obligation of conscience."—*Wordsworth.*

b "It is the curse of impiety not to perceive the hand of God in calamities."—*Fausset.* "They argue, from the fallacious topic of worldly prosperity, that then they must needs have been in the right."—*Lowth.* "So perversely did they misconstrue providence, though God, by His prophets, had so often explained it to them, and the thing itself spoke the direct contrary."—*Mat. Henry.*

c Nu. xxx. 7, 8.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

e Roberts.

a "When chastisement comes, men must not be content with examining the immediate past, but must make a more searching inquiry, and they will then find that sin long

persisted in has been that which the Divine justice could no longer bear."—*Spk. Com.*

b La. i. 8; Da. ix. 11, 12.

"There are minerals called hydrophanous, which are not transparent till they are immersed in water, when they become so; as the hydrophane, a variety of opal. So it is with many a Christian. Till the floods of adversity have been poured over him, his character appears marred and clouded by selfishness and worldly influences. But trials clear away the obscurity, and give distinctness and beauty to his piety."—*Prof. Hitchcock.*

c Grindon.

a "The Jews, heretofore, in the midst of all their idolatry, had retained the form of appeal to the name of God, and the law, the distinctive glory of their nation. God will allow this no more."—*Pausset.*

Vows are easily made, but more easily broken. A sea captain, while upon a single plank in the wide ocean, vowed to devote his life to God if he should be saved, but forgot his vow as soon as his feet

mistakes that are made in tracing their causes. III. Show that these mistakes arise from the pride of heart which declines the admission of human guilt. IV. Consider the Divine declaration in the words, "therefore," etc.

Adversity: its history.—Scripture history (which has a didactic intent throughout) is one continuous detail of misfortune and success, trouble and consolation:—the narrative, for instance, of the pilgrimage of the Israelites, universally acknowledged to be typical of the way of regeneration. In this, every one is beset by hindrances and temptations, which, though sorely oppressive while they last, nevertheless give place in turn to triumph. The hunger and thirst, and bitter streams, all show what must be anticipated, but no less so the supply of food, and the sweetening of the waters. It is a happy thing for a man to feel famished, and that the waters are bitter, for it is the sign of an amending nature, and leads him to cry to God for help. If we are not often so impelled, it is a proof that we are but little advanced upon our journey. There can be no virtue or gladness without trial and suffering in the first place. There is no buying corn of Joseph till there has been a famine in the land: nor can any man know what are the green pastures and the still waters, till he has been in the valley of the shadow of death. God cannot lead him thither till he has felt how weak he is in himself. Until this experience shall have been gone through, they are a mere mirage of the imagination. "It must needs be that the Son of Man suffer before He enter into His glory." In its aptitude for grievances, temptations, and perplexities, conjoined with its free-will, the spirit of man is constituted in the very best manner possible for urging him on towards heaven. Though they are painful to him, they are privileges. That was a deep insight into the economy of Providence which saw that

"Sweet are the uses of adversity."

Had Flavius Bœthius never been imprisoned by Theodoric, he had never written his *Consolations of Philosophy*. To a prison, also, we owe *Pilgrim's Progress.*[c]

24—28. (24, 25) **fulfilled . . land,** "when Jer. said these words he pointed to their hands, in which they were carrying the crescent-shaped cakes wh. they had vowed to the goddess." **surely accomplish,** better read as an ironical phrase—"accomplish then four words, and see what will come of it." (26) **I have sworn,**[a] comp. God's solemn vow with theirs. God refuses to recognise any longer His covenant relation to this remnant. (27) **watch,** *etc.*, ch. i. 10; Eze. vii. 6. (28) **small number,** *v.* 14. **know,** by better and desolating experiences.

Man's words and God's (*v.* 28).—I. The words of man betray often the sin of the heart and the vanity of the mind. II. The words of God manifest His integrity, holiness, power and love. III. In regard to life and salvation, time and eternity, whose shall stand? IV. Whose word shall stand the test of the hour of repentance or death?

Inattentive hearers.—It is said of Demosthenes that, speaking to the Athenians on a very serious subject, and finding them to be inattentive, he paused, and told them that he had something of special importance to relate, which he was anxious that they should all hear. Silence being thus obtained, and every eye

fixed upon him, he said that two men, having bargained for the hire of an ass, were travelling from Athens to Megara on a very hot day, and both of them striving to enjoy the shadow of the ass. One of them said that he hired the ass and the shadow too; the other said that he hired the ass only and not the shadow. Having made this grave statement, Demosthenes retired; when the people pressed him with great eagerness to return and finish his tale. "O ye Athenians," said he, "will ye attend to me when speaking about the shadow of an ass; and will ye not attend to me when I address you on the most important affairs?" This reproof does not apply exclusively to the "men of Athens." English people are deeply concerned in it; and the ministers of Christ, who are accustomed to discourse upon subjects immensely more important than any that called forth the eloquence of the Athenian orator, have reason to urge the same complaint. Many persons have an ear for vanity, but none for the truth: they will listen to folly, but not to the words of wisdom. To the things of this world they will pay a fixed attention, but to Christ and His salvation they are criminally indifferent.[b]

were on the solid earth. Mrs. Judson, in the beginning of her religious life, twice forgot her vows; falling easily into the old habit of dancing when in the society of dancing people.

b Thornton.

29, 30. (29) sign, a calamity wh. you shall *witness* shall be to you the assurance of calamities wh. you shall *suffer*. (30) Pharaoh-hophra,[a] or Apries, who succeeded *Psammis*, the successor of Pharaoh-Necho, who was beaten by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish. The calamity of Hophra came about six or seven years after Jer.'s prophecy.[b] He was kept prisoner in his palace at Saïs for more than ten years, and died B.C. 570. He was intensely hated by the Egyptians.

Historical signs (*v.* 29).—I. The sign mentioned in the text a reminder of the retributive justice of God. II. The events of history to be interpreted in the light of Divine justice and love. III. Some of them, as destruction of Armada, invention of printing, discovery of America, pre-eminently significant.

a "The prophecy was fulfilled by the miserable death of Apries, who for a time flourished in great prosperity, and arrogantly presumed upon his own power, and impiously vaunted that no god could overthrow it, but was defeated by Amasis, who had rebelled against him, and was strangled by his own subjects."—*Herodotus.*
b Bosanquet.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIFTH.

1—5. (1) when . . written, *see* ch. xxxvi., which this should follow. (2, 3) grief . . sorrow, Baruch grieved for the nation's sins, and sorrowed for the punishments such sins must surely involve. Possibly also Baruch had to bear personal troubles in that anxious time. (4) break down, *comp.* ch. i. 10. (5) great things, matters of personal benefit. "Dost thou aspire to honour and dignity in a time of common calamity?"[a] for a prey, ch. xxxix. 18.

Ambition (*v.* 5).—I. The evil denounced. It may be viewed under three aspects. 1. There are some who pursue worldly objects that are far above them: 2. There are some who pursue with undue eagerness worldly objects they might reasonably hope to attain; 3. There are some who pursue all classes of worldly objects in a selfish spirit. II. The reasons why it is denounced. 1. Because it attaches excessive value to worldly objects: 2. Because it misapprehends the comparative advantages of the different ranks in the social scale; 3. Because it overlooks the duties which arise out of the relations we sustain to our race and our Maker; 4. Because it ignores all the facts, and objects, and

a "Baruch, who was of a noble house in Jerusalem, and whose brother Seraiah was advanced to high place in the court of Judah, felt, it seems, some disappointment in seeing that the avenues to the promotion and preferment of which he had a reasonable expectation, and to which he aspired, were closed by his call to the service of God."—*Wordsworth.* *vv.* 2—5. *Dr. T. Jackson*, xi. 79. *v.* 5. *N. Homes.*

563; *T. Manton*, v. 1022; *H. Wilkinson*, i. 19; *Habak. Crabb*, 271; *Dr. G. Fothergill*, ii. 235; *Dr. V. Knox*, vi. 291; *Dr. E. Payson*, iii. 503.

b G. Brooks.

c Whitecross.

interests, and blessings of the spiritual world. Address—1. Worldlings; 2. Christians.[b]

Ambition.—The deadness of John, Duke of Saxony, to the world was very remarkable. When he was informed of the rebellion of the ascetics, which led to so afflictive a war in Germany, he said, "If it be the will of God that I should continue a prince, as I have hitherto been, His will be done: but if otherwise, I can descend to a lower station: fewer horses and a humbler equipage will serve me as well."[c]

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SIXTH.

1—4. (1) **Gentiles**, or the nations. (2) **against Egypt**, or relating to Egypt. **Carchemish**, prob. *Circesium*, the fortress at the confluence of the Chaboras and the Euphrates. Reference is to a second battle at this place; in the first Josiah had been killed.[a] (3) **order**, or get in order. **buckler**, a small round shield, carried by light-armed troops. **shield**, a heavier defence, covering the whole body. (4) **harness**, or mount. **furbish**,[b] rub or scour to brightness. **brigandines**,[c] coats of mail.

The battle cry (*v.* 3).—I. There are wars of conquest, resulting from unrighteous ambition, pride, etc. II. There are wars of defence, as when men fight for home and liberty, etc.—as Switzerland, etc. III. There are wars of Divine retribution, as when God moves the hearts of men to punish sin and oppression. IV. In the midst of all war it is the believer's privilege to live at peace with God. V. Learn the folly of fighting against God. "Who hath fought against God and prospered?"

Brigandine.—A piece of defensive armour used in early times was the breastplate or corslet: with this Goliath was accoutred; but in our version the original term is rendered a coat of mail; and in the inspired account of the Jewish armour it is translated habergeon. It was between the joints of this harness (for so we render it in that passage) that Ahab received his mortal wound by an arrow shot at a venture. To this species of armour the Prophet Isaiah alludes, where the same Hebrew word is used as in the preceding texts, but is here rendered breastplate; and in the prophecies of Jeremiah it is translated brigandine. From the use of these various terms, in translating the Hebrew term shirion, it seems to have covered both the back and breast of the warrior, but was probably intended chiefly for the defence of the latter, and, by consequence, took its name from that circumstance.[d]

5—8. (5) **wherefore**, *etc.*, a sudden exclamation of astonishment.[a] So well equipped an army was nevertheless driven back in dismay. **look not back**, make no attempt to halt in their flight. **fear**, or panic, wh. utterly disorganises an army. (6) **let not**, better rend., the swift shall not successfully flee. **north**, Euphrates was northward in relation to Judah. (7) **as a flood**, as their own Nile, swelling with flood. **waters . . rivers**, or, "as the streams roll on their waters:" or "his waters toss to and fro as the rivers."[b] (8) **the city**, better, cities in general, the expression of the world-conquering power.

a 2 Chr. xxxv. 20. *Prof. Rawlinson* objects to this identification of Carchemish, and places it higher up the river, in a position which made it the key of Syria.

b Fr. *fourbir*; It. *forbire*; Ger. *furban*, to cleanse.

c "Footmen in the time of Holinshed were called *brigans*; *brigata* was an Italian division of an army."—*Wootrych.* "This term translates the Hebrew word *siryon*, a coat of mail. Brigandine is defined by Wedgwood and Richardson as a kind of scale armour, made of many-jointed plates, very pliant and, easy for the body, so called from being used by the light-armed foot soldiers known as brigands."—*Venables.*

d Paxton.

a "The moment seized by the Prophet is that when the Eg. host first feels that the battle is lost, and, overborne by the enemy, loses heart, and in despair, yet not without a struggle, gives way."—*Spk. Com.*

Adjuncts of war.—
In thy faint slumbers, I by thee have watch'd,
And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars ;
Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed ;
Cry, Courage ! to the field ! and thou hast talk'd
Of sallies and retires ; of trenches, tents,
Of pallisadoes, frontiers, parapets ;
Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin ;
Of prisoners' ransom, and of soldiers slain,
And all the currents of a heady fight.[c]

9–12. (9) Ethiopians, Heb. *Cush.* Libyans, Heb. *Put.* shield, so forming the heavy-armed detachments. bow, indicating that they were the light-armed troops. (10) this, the day of Egypt's defeat.[a] sword, *etc.*, ch. ii. 30. (11) virgin, Egypt is so called bec. she had never been brought under the power of any foreign monarch. not be cured,[b] the overthrow would be final, the loss could never be retrieved. Egypt would never recover its former strength. (12) the land, *i.e.* the earth. mighty . . mighty, in the wild confusion the warriors trampled down each other.

The balm of Gilead, or balsam of Mecca.—The genuine balsam of Mecca (*Amyris opobalsamum*) is both scarce and expensive. The kings of Judah cultivated this shrub, but only to a very small extent. It will be interesting to learn that a bottle of this extraordinary balsam is kept at the botanical garden at Paris, as an object of the rarest and highest value. What is generally sold by the name of balsam of Mecca is merely the oil, obtained by boiling, from the seeds, stones, and branches of the tree. The balm itself is too rare to be purchased in the ordinary way. Josephus informs us that the queen of Sheba brought it first to Judæa, where balsam, myrrh, and incense, in the days of old, were to be seen used by the populace in abundance almost daily. This is one of the many things which we "mourn for" in "the days gone by." The reason of its excessive scarcity is supposed to be owing to the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews, actuated by despair and hatred, destroyed all the balsam plants. There are none now to be found in Palestine. Only one plantation is now known to furnish it, and that is in Arabia Petræa. The whole plantation only yields about three pounds annually, and it is monopolised by the Grand Seignior. This, of course, we can scarcely refrain from noticing without an expression of regret.[c]

13–17. (13) the word, or prophetic message. how, *i.e.* declaring how. (14) declare, *etc.*, ch. iv. 5. Migdol, *etc.*, ch. xliv. 1. stand fast, take your places in your ranks.[a] sword shall devour, or hath devoured ; alluding to the previous conquests of Nebuchadnezzar. (15) thy valiant men, or, "thy mighty one." The *Sept.* understands the reference to be to *Apis*, the Bull, the idol of Egypt.[b] (16) one . . another, as *v.* 12. to our own people, this would be the cry of the *hired troops* in the Egyptian army, such as are mentioned in *v.* 9. (17) a noise, or empty sound ; or *ruin*, *i.e.* is ruined.

Battle-field, after a lapse of time.—
Then after length of time, the labouring swains,
Who turn the turfs of those unhappy plains,

b "The rise of the Nile is gentle, but at the mouth it, unlike most rivers, is much agitated, owing to the sand banks impeding its course, and so it rushes into the sea like a cataract."—*Fausset.*
c Shakespeare.

a For "day of the Lord" see Is. xiii. 6 ; Joel i. 15, ii. 1 ; Am. v. 18 ; Zep. i. 14, 15.
b Je. xxx. 13 ; Eze. xxx. 21.
"Physicians in England would be perfectly astonished at the numerous kinds of medicine wh. are administered to a patient. The people themselves are unwilling to take one kind for long together, and I have known a sick woman swallow ten different sorts in one day. Should a patient, when about to take his medicine, scatter or spill the least quantity, nothing will induce him to take the rest ; it is a bad omen ; he must have the nostrum changed."—*Roberts.*
c Piesse's Art of Perfumery.

a "Some take this as an ironical address to Egypt, and a summons to them to stand upon their defence."—*Henderson.*
b "Apis, the bull-shaped Egyptian idol, worshipped at Neph, or Memphis. The contrast thus is between the palpable impotence of the idol, and

the *might* attributed to it by its worshippers."—*Fraussel.*

c Dryden.

Shall rusty piles from the plough'd furrows take,
And over empty helmets pass the rake:
Amazed at antique titles on the stones,
And mighty reliques of gigantic bones.[c]

a "Tabor rises in the form of a truncated cone to the height of about 1,350 feet above the plain of Esdraelon, its total height above the sea level being 1,805 feet. Other mountains of equal elevation are in sight, but its shape and the wide extent of the plain around it, make it a far more conspicuous object. Carmel also is a most commanding mountain."—*Robinson.*

18—21. (18) as Tabor, or "like a Tabor among the mountains." Tabor is mentioned for its great and noble elevation.[a] Nebuchadnezzar is compared to these mountains. (19) daughter . . Egypt, fig. term for the people of Egypt.[b] furnish . . captivity, make preparations for the captivity which will surely be your lot. (20) destruction, or "the destroyer." Lit. "a gadfly from the north has come upon her." The fly that destroys cattle. (21) hired men, mercenary troops. fatted bullocks, ready to be slaughtered.

The oaths of Jehovah (*v.* 18).—I. The Divine oaths recorded in Scripture exhibit and declare the glory of the Divine character. 1. As they show forth the infinite condescension of God; 2. As they furnish a sublime and awful manifestation of the sincere earnestness of the Divine mind in what He declares unto us in His Word, with such an attestation; 3. As they exhibit the benevolent solicitude of God for the welfare of the unworthy creatures whom He thus addresses; 4. As they intimate the unchangeableness of the Divine mind in relation to those arrangements in His moral and natural government which were in that manner established and confirmed. II. The Divine oaths also serve to illustrate the moral character of man, and to exercise a powerful influence on his moral and spiritual influence. 1. As they strongly corroborate the fact that the human heart is corrupt and alienated from God; 2. As they are fearful warnings of the perilous condition of the impenitent and unbelieving soul; 3. As they afford the strongest encouragement to believers in their onward progress to heaven.[c]

b Comp. Je. iv. 31.

c Dr. W. Rees.

22—26. (22) like a serpent, as a snake disturbed by the wood-cutters glides swiftly away. (23) though . . searched, *i.e.* though it seems to be impenetrable. A fig. for the vast multitudes of the Egyptian army. grasshoppers, or locusts. (24) daughter, as *v.* 19. (25) multitude, better. "Ammon of No."[a] No, the sacred city of Thebes. (26) afterwards, after a time of Divine judgments, lasting some forty yrs.[b]

No-Amon (*v.* 25).—No, or No-Amon, or Amon of No (marginal reading), was the metropolis of Upper Egypt, by the Greek geographers termed Thebes, a city eminently distinguished for the worship of Jupiter, who by the Egyptians was called Amon or Ammon; hence the city received the appellation of Diospolis, or the City of Jupiter. The grandeur of ancient Thebes must now be traced in the four small towns or hamlets of Luxor, Karnak, Medinet-Abou, and Gournou. Karnak is regarded by the most accurate modern travellers as the principal site of Diospolis; and the Egyptians seem to have called forth all the resources of wealth, and all the efforts of art, in order to render it worthy of their supreme divinity.[c]

a "He was the first of the supreme triad of Thebes, and confessedly his form was the most elevated and spiritual under which the Egyptian priesthood represented the divinity to the adoration of the people. He was the deity invisible and unfathomable, whose name signifies *the concealed*, and was the mysterious mainspring, who created, preserves, and governs the world."—*Lenormant.*

b Eze. xxix. 13.

c Horne.

27, 28. (27) fear thou not, *etc.*, Is. xli. 13, xliii. 5, xliv. 2; Je. xxx. 10. (28) a full end, ch. xxx. 11.[a]

God's promise unchangeable.—Verse 28 is so closely connected with ver. 27, that both must be read together. They resemble chap. xxx. 10, 11, and relate probably to the same subject.

a "Nations have their periods; the Jewish nation itself has come to an end as a nation; but the

Towards the fall of the Jewish monarchy, Judæa became the battle-ground between the Egyptians, on one side, and the Babylonians on the other. It was subject now to one of these powers, now to the other, as they respectively conquered. At length Babylon became finally master of the territory from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates, 2 Kings xxiv. 7. In the days of Jehoiakim Jerusalem was held under vassalage to Nebuchadnezzar, who took Daniel and his companions, with probably others of its principal inhabitants, to Babylon. Subsequently Jerusalem was more thoroughly subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, and large numbers of its people were carried away to his distant empire. The Prophet, in the passage to be elucidated, comforts the Jews under the humiliation and sufferings thus inflicted on them. Their land should not be made "altogether desolate," Jer. xxx. 11. The nations which oppressed and enslaved Judæa should be destroyed, but God would not make a full end of her. She should be corrected with moderation, and her sons should afterwards be restored to their own land. This prediction was fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylon under favour of Cyrus, the conqueror of all the East.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SEVENTH.

1—4. (1) against, or, concerning. before . . Gaza, it is not certain which Pharaoh is here referred to, and we have no certain reference to the event. Poss. he took Gaza on his return from his victory at Carchemish.[a] (2) waters rise, Is. viii. 7. overflowing flood, or torrent. Is. xxx. 28. (3) noise . . hoofs, Nah. iii. 2. fathers . . children, each would care only to save himself in the general fright; and natural affections would be destroyed. feebleness of hands, by being made helpless with extreme fear. (4) remnant . . Caphtor, prob. *Crete*, whence the Philistines had originally, in part, come.[b]

Ruins at Gaza.—"The ruins of white marble sometimes found at Gaza prove that it was formerly the abode of luxury and opulence. It has shared in the general destruction; and, notwithstanding its proud title of the capital of Palestine, it is now no more than a defenceless village" (baldness has come upon it), "peopled by, at most, only two thousand inhabitants." It is forsaken and bereaved of its king. "The sea-coast, by which it was formerly washed, is every day removing farther from the deserted ruins of Ashkelon." It shall be a desolation. Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. "Amid the various successive ruins, those of Edzoud (Ashdod), so powerful under the Philistines, are now remarkable for their scorpions." The inhabitants shall be cut off from Ashdod. Although the Christian traveller must yield the palm to Volney, as the topographer of prophecy, and although supplementary evidence be not requisite, yet a place is here willingly given to the following just observations.[c]

5—7. (5) baldness, the sign of mourning, ch. xvi. 6. cut off, or speechless through grief. valley, or low-lying plain, known as *Shephelah*. cut thyself, another sign of extreme grief. (6) sword, *etc.*, the instrument of Divine judgment.[a] how long, this is the supposed complaint of the Philistines.

Gospel Church, God's spiritual Israel, still continues, and will to the end of time; in *that* this promise is to have its full accomplishment, that, though God correct it, He will never make a full end of it."—*Mat. Henry.*

"They were, in truth, great rascals, and belonged to that class of people who find things before they are lost."—*Grimm.*

r. 28. *C. H. Hall, Bamp. Lec.* 153.

a 2 Chr. xxxv. 20, xxxvi. 3.

b "The Philistines, being the neighbours of the Phœnicians, would naturally make a common cause with them in case of foreign invasion."—*Henderson.*

"There can be no treaty of peace till we lay down these weapons of rebellion with which we fight against heaven; nor can we expect to have our distempers cured, if our daily food be poison."—*Scougal.*

c *Keith*, and see next page,

a Eze. xiv. 17, xxi. 3.

r. 6. *C. Chais*, i. 220; *A. Shanks*, 368; *J. Francis*,

(7) given it a charge, wh. it is bound to execute to the full. sea shore? the strip of shore-land held by the Philistines.

The means of terminating war (*vv.* 6, 7).—I. The evils of protracted war. 1. War is a tremendous evil: 2. Well might the Prophet desire its speedy termination. II. The reason of its continuance. 1. War is one of those judgments with which God punishes the sins of men; 2. Till He has effected His purposes by it, no human efforts can bring it to a close. III. Means of its termination. 1. The intention of God's chastisements is to bring us to repentance; 2. On the attainment of this end He will instantly remove His judgments from us. IV. Suggests some hints respecting those heavy judgments which God has denounced against sinners in another world, and respecting the best means of averting them from our souls.[b]

Land of Philistines.—The land of the Philistines was to be destroyed. It partakes of the general desolation common to it with Judæa, and other neighbouring states. While ruins are to be found in all Syria, they are particularly abundant along the sea-coast, which formed, on the south, the realm of the Philistines. But its aspect presents some existing peculiarities, which travellers fail not to particularise, and which in reference both to the state of the country, and the fate of its different cities, the Prophets failed not to discriminate as justly as if their description had been drawn both with all the accuracy which ocular observation and all the certainty which authenticated history could give. And the authority so often quoted may here be again appealed to. Volney (though, like one who in ancient times was instrumental to the fulfilment of a special prediction, "he meant not so, neither did his heart think so"), from the manner in which he generalises his observations, and marks the peculiar features of the different districts of Syria, with greater acuteness and perspicuity than any other traveller whatever, is the ever-ready purveyor of evidence in all the cases which came within the range of his topographical description of the wide field of prophecy—while, at the same time, from his known, open and zealous hostility to the Christian cause, his testimony is alike decisive and unquestionable; and the vindication of the truth of the following predictions may safely be committed to this redoubted champion of infidelity.[c]

CHAPTER THE FORTY-EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) Moab, Ge. xix. 37. The districts near to the Dead Sea.[a] Moab had taken part with the Chaldæans against Judah.[b] Nebo, a town 8 Rom. miles S. of Heshbon.[c] Kiriathaim, prob. *Et-teym*, west of Medeba, and S.W. of Heshbon. Misgab, this word is better translated the "high citadel." Ref. is to the celebrated fortress, *Kir-heres*.[d] (2) Heshbon,[e] the capital city of the Moabites, Nu. xxi. 26. When the Chaldæans took this city, they there *devised* plans for subduing the whole country. Heshbon in Chaldee means "*a device*." madmen, Is. xxv. 10. (3) Horonaim, Is. xv. 5.

Moab.—The land of Moab lay to the east and south-east of Judæa, and bordered on the east, north-east, and partly on the south by the Dead Sea. Its early history is nearly analogous to

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ii. 72; *R. Cecil*, ii. 337.

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"It is fabled of Achilles, the Grecian chief, that his mother dipped him, when a child, in the river Styx, by which every part of his body was rendered invulnerable except the heel of one foot, by which she had held him. Paris, his inveterate enemy, becoming acquainted with this one unprotected part, shot Achilles in the heel and mortally wounded him. Thus every man needs to be armed with the complete armour of God, else his inveterate foe, Satan, will be sure to hit the least part that he finds unarmed." —*Spencer.*

[c] *Keith*, continued from last page.

[a] "These districts were possessed by the Emim, a gigantic people, but the Moabites were successful in expelling them, and occupied at first a considerable region, the uplands east of the Dead Sea, and the Jordan as far as the mountains of Gilead, together with the

that of Ammon; and the soil, though perhaps more diversified, is, in many places where the desert and plains of salt have not encroached on its borders, of equal fertility. There are manifest and abundant vestiges of its ancient greatness. "The whole of the plains are covered with the sites of towns, on every eminence or spot convenient for the construction of one. And as the land is capable of rich cultivation, there can be no doubt that the country now so deserted once presented a continued picture of plenty and fertility." The form of fields is still visible; and there are the remains of Roman highways, which in some places are completely paved, and on which there are milestones of the times of Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Severus, with the number of the miles legible upon them. Wherever any spot is cultivated, the corn is luxuriant: and the riches of the soil cannot perhaps be more clearly illustrated than by the fact, that one grain of Heshbon wheat exceeds in dimensions two of the ordinary sort, and more than double the number of grains grow on the stalk. The frequency, and almost, in many instances, the close vicinity of the sites of the ancient towns, "prove that the population of the country was formerly proportioned to its natural fertility." Such evidence may surely suffice to prove that the country was well cultivated and peopled at a period so long posterior to the date of the predictions, that no cause less than supernatural could have existed at the time when they were delivered, which could have authorised the assertion, with the least probability or apparent possibility of its truth, that Moab would ever have been reduced to that state of great and permanent desolation in which it has continued for so many ages, and which vindicates and ratifies to this hour the truth of the Scriptural prophecies.*f*

4—6. (4) Moab, prob. meaning here the city *Ar-Moab*, Nu. xxi. 15. her little ones, "her children augmenting the melancholy and distressing scene by their pitiable shrieks." (5) Luhith, situated on a height; comp. Is. xv. 5. continual weeping, *lit.* "with weeping shall go up weeping." going down, descending into the valley towards Horonaim. (6) like the heath, live in the wilderness like the heath, or juniper,[a] do not trust to walls.

Flee for your life (*v.* 6).—I. Whence you are to flee. II. Where you are to flee. III. How you are to flee. IV. When you are to flee. V. Why you are to flee.[b]

The heath in the wilderness.—This does not refer to the common heather so familiar in our own country, but to a species of plant growing in lonely desert places in the south of Palestine, which bears some resemblance to our common heather, especially to those dry stumps over which fire has passed, and which have been bleached by exposure to the weather. This plant is called by a long name—Anastatica; but it is more familiarly known as the Rose of Jericho. . . . The Crusaders used to bring it home from the Holy Land, and some superstitious tales are told of it; as, for example, that it first burst into blossom on Christmas Eve to welcome the birth of the Heavenly Babe, and paid its tribute of honour to the resurrection of the Redeemer by continuing in flower till Easter morn. But its own true history is stranger even than these fables. The spots where it is found are moistened with water during the rainy season, but in the hot summer they are dried up, and become baked by the heat almost as hard as a

lowlands between their own hills and the river, a region perhaps 50 miles in length, and 10 or 12 broad."—*Ayre.*

b 2 Ki. xxiv. 2.

c Nu. xxxii. 3, 38.

d Is. xv. 1, xvi. 7, 11.

e "An ancient and royal city, nearly midway between the rivers Jabbok and Arnon, the ruins of which cover the sides of an elevated hill, wh. commands an extensive view of the surrounding country."—*Henderson.*

f *Keith.*

a "Resort to the most solitary places you can think of, where nothing grows but barren shrubs, and where no enemy can find you out."—*Lowth.*

b *Hugh Macmillan.*

"All furnish'd, all in arms, all plumed like estridges, that wing the wind; baited like eagles having lately bathed, glittering in golden coats, like images; as full of spirit as the month of May, and gorgeous as the sun at midsummer; wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls." — *Shakespeare.*

A soldier of Marshal Saxe's army, being discovered in theft, was condemned to

be hung. What he had stolen might be worth five shillings. The Marshal meeting him, as he was led to execution, said to him—"What a miserable fool you were to risk your life for five shillings." "General," replied the soldier, "I have risked it every day for fivepence." This repartee saved his life.

"So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray, and yet they glide, like happiness, away."—*Byron.*

c Hugh Macmillan.

brick. Rain seldom falls in the south of Palestine: months frequently pass away without a shower, or a cloud as big as a man's hand; the sky above is like brass, and the earth beneath as iron: and all the channels of the streams and rills are dry and white as the roads. Now what becomes of the Rose of Jericho? . . . God, whose tender mercies are over all His works, . . . has furnished it with a remarkable provision by which it escapes from the dreadful consequences of drought. Whenever all the water within reach of its roots is exhausted, and it can get no more, it sheds its leaves, gathers all its branches together, and rolls itself up into an irregular elastic ball. And thus packed up in a travelling bag, composed of its own framework, like the fairies of old that were said to go from place to place in chariots of nutshells, it awaits patiently till the wind of the desert begins to blow. It is then speedily uprooted, rolls easily over the surface, and is driven to and fro through the desert. For days, and sometimes even weeks, it is whirled about from place to place, but it suffers no injury. The life is still strong in it, and all its tender and vital parts are gathered safely into the middle, protected by the branches, that close over them like a network. It looks a dry, unsightly thing in this state. But at last it is carried to the brink of a stream, to some little oasis or spot of moisture; and no sooner does it feel the scent of water than it begins slowly to unfold its branches, to stretch down its roots into the moist soil, and to expand its tiny flowers in the genial atmosphere. It grows on that spot until it, too, becomes a dry and parched land, and then it rolls itself up in a ball, is again uprooted by the winds, and carried to a moist place, where it again unfolds itself and grows. It repeats this strange process of migration until its seeds are perfected and ready to be shed in a suitable place for their growth, when it finally dies. And though its withered branches continue for many years to curl and expand, according to the state of the atmosphere, this is no longer a vital, but a mechanical process.[c]

7—10. (7) works, or fortifications.[a] Chemosh, the national god of Moab,[b] representing the whole land.[c] priests, *etc.*, ch. xlix. 3. (8) valley, or lowlands on the east bank of the Jordan. plain, *comp.* De. iv. 43, upland pasture districts. (9) give wings, &c. only extreme haste can save any of them. (10) deceitfully, or *remissly*, negligently. Reference is to the agents sent by God to execute His judgments on Moab.

Lukewarmness and zeal (*v.* 10).—He serves God deceitfully—1. Who serves Him with the body without the soul; 2. He who serves Him with the soul without the body, when both may be conjoined in His service; 3. He who reserves one faculty for sin or one sin for themselves, or one action to please himself and many for religion.[d]

Moab.—Moab has often been a field of contest between the Arabs and Turks; and although the former have retained possession of it, both have mutually reduced it to desolation. The different tribes of Arabs who traverse it not only bear a permanent and habitual hostility to Christians and to Turks, but one tribe is often at variance and at war with another: and the regular cultivation of the soil, or the improvement of those natural advantages of which the country is so full, is a matter either never thought of, or that cannot be realised. Property is

a So read the *LXX.*, *Syr.*, and *Vulg.*

b Nu. xxi. 29.

c "Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, near to Jerusalem (1 Ki. xi. 7, 33), which was defiled by Josiah (2 Ki. xxiii. 13). There are various conjectures concerning this false god; some identifying him with Mars, and some with Saturn."—*Ayre.*

d Bp. Taylor.

"According to Jewish tradition, he was worshipped under the symbol of a black

there the creature of power, and not of law; and possession forms no security when plunder is the preferable right. Hence the extensive plains, where they are not partially covered with wood, present a barren aspect, which is only relieved at intervals by a few clusters of wild fig trees, that show how the richest gifts of nature degenerate when unaided by the industry of man. And instead of the profusion which the plains must have exhibited in every quarter, nothing but "patches of the best soil in the territory are now cultivated by the Arabs;" and these only "whenever they have the prospect of being able to secure the harvest against the incursions of enemies." The Arab herds now roam at freedom over the valleys and the plains; and "the many vestiges of field enclosures" form not any obstruction; they wander undisturbed around the tents of their masters, over the face of the country; and while the valley is perished, and the plain destroyed, the cities also of Aroer are forsaken; they are for the flocks which lie down, and none make them afraid. The strong contrast between the ancient and the actual state of Moab is exemplified in the condition of the inhabitants as well as of the land; and the coincidence between the prediction and the fact is as striking in the one case as in the other.[e]

11—13. (11) settled .. lees, as wine is left, after fermentation, to preserve its strength and flavour.[a] For similar figure comp. Zep. i. 12. emptied .. vessel, by a refining process that removes the dregs. taste, his pride and luxury. (12) wanderers,[b] themselves wandering fr. distant Chaldæa, and making him wander: but the fig. is taken from lifting a pitcher to pour out its contents. (13) ashamed, bec. her idol can give her no security. of Beth-el, 1 Ki. xii. 29.

Wanderers of the desert (*v.* 12).—The Bedouin (wandering) Arabs are now the chief and almost the only inhabitants of a country once studded with cities. Traversing the country, and fixing their tents for a short time in one place, and then decamping to another, depasturing every part successively, and despoiling the whole land of its natural produce, they are wanderers who have come up against it, and who keep it in a state of perpetual desolation. They lead a wandering life; and the only regularity they know or practise is to act upon a systematic scheme of spoliation. They prevent any from forming a fixed settlement who are inclined to attempt it; for although the fruitfulness of the soil would abundantly repay the labour of settlers, and render migration wholly unnecessary, even if the population were increased more than tenfold, yet the Bedouins forcibly deprive them of the means of subsistence, compel them to search for it elsewhere, and, in the words of the prediction, literally cause them to wander. "It may be remarked generally of the Bedouins," says Burckhardt, in describing their extortions in this very country, "that wherever they are the masters of the cultivators, the latter are soon reduced to beggary by their unceasing demands."[c]

14—17. (14) mighty, and quite able to stand in the war. (15) gone up, fled away out of. chosen .. men, the choice of them have only gone to battle to be slain. (16) near to come, Is. xiii. 22. About twenty-two years passed bet. this

star, wh. would seem to countenance the opinion that he corresponded to Saturn."—*Henderson.*

v. 10. *Bp. Taylor*, v. 127; *S. Davis*, iii. 84; *G. Matthew*, ii. 117; *T. Knowles*, ii. 269; *Bp. Hampden*, 101.

e Keith.

a "As wine left to settle on its own lees retains its flavour and strength, which it would lose by being poured from one vessel into another, so Moab, owing to its never having been dislodged from its settlements, retains its pride of strength unimpaired."—*Faussel.*

"Wine, as first expressed from the grape, is a thick discoloured fluid or juice. It is then fermented, passing through a process that separates the impurities and settles them as lees on the bottom. Standing thus upon its lees or dregs, in some large tun or vat, it is not further improved. A gross and coarse flavour remains, and the scent of the feculent matter stays by, and becomes fastened, as it were, in the body of the wine itself."—*Bushnell.*

b Lit. *tilters* who tip a vessel to drain the wine off from the dregs.

v. 11. *C. Heurtley*, i. 83; *A. Roberts*, ii. 48.

c Keith.

"There is a spirit of resistance implanted by the Deity in the breast of man, proportioned to the size of the wrongs he is destined to endure."—*C. J. Fox.*

prophecy and the calamity. (17) strong staff, that thought itself so strong.

The strong staff and the beautiful rod (*v.* 17).—I. The purposes of our Heavenly Father in great bereavements. 1. To teach us that we should not misplace our trust; 2. To convince us of our sins and to sever us from them; 3. To teach us His own independence of the instruments He employs; 4. To remind us of the sovereignty of God; 5. To exhibit His wise and watchful providence. II. The duties to which we are, amid such scenes, specially called. 1. We are to exercise submission; 2. That we should profit by the example of those who have died in the Lord; 3. That we should cease from man and put our trust in God.[a]

a W. R. Williams.

18—20. (18) Dibon, Is. xv. 2. sit in thirst, *comp.* "sit in the dust," Is. xlvii. 1.[a] "Sit in a land where everything is parched."[b] (19) Aroer, on the river Arnon. De. ii. 36. It lay in the way of the Moabites who fled to Arabia Deserta: and its inhabitants would learn from the fugitives the lot that surely awaited themselves. (20) it is, *i.e. Dibon.*

a "Jer. draws a picture of the conquered inhabitants, who formed a valuable part of the spoil of war, collected together outside the walls, waiting until the time comes for their captors to march them away to the slave-mart."—*Spk. Com.*

Dibon.—The ruins of Diban (Dibon) situated in the midst of a fine plain, are of considerable extent, but present nothing of interest. The neighbouring hot wells, and the similarity of the name, identify the ruins of Myoun with Meon, or Beth Meon of Scripture. Of this ancient city, as well as of Araayr (Aroer), nothing is now remarkable but what is common to them with all the cities of Moab—their entire desolation. The extent of the ruins of Rabba (Rabbath Moab), formerly the residence of the kings of Moab, sufficiently proves its ancient importance, though no other object can be particularised among the ruins except the remains of a palace or temple, some of the walls of which are still standing; a gate belonging to another building: and an insulated altar. There are many remains of private buildings, but none entire. There being no springs on the spot, the town had two birkets, the largest of which is cut entirely out of the rock ground, together with many cisterns. Mount Nebo was completely barren when Burckhardt passed over it, and the site of the ancient city had not been ascertained. Nebo is spoiled.[c]

b Wordsworth.

"Destruction o'ertakes as often those that fly as those that boldly meet it."—*Denham.*

c Keith.

21—25. (21) Holon, Jos. xv. 51. Jahazah, Nu. xxi. 23; Is. xv. 4. Mephaath, Jos. xiii. 18, xxi. 37. (22) Beth-diblathaim, *comp.* Nu. xxxiii. 46, and Eze. vi. 14. (23) Beth-gamul, the city of camels. The site is unknown. Beth-meon, *comp.* Jos. xiii. 17. Now *Minn*, a mere ruin. (24) Kerioth, Jos. xv. 25: Am. ii. 2. Bozrah, Ge. xxxvi. 33: Is. lxiii. 1. (25) horn, the Eastern emblem of strength and sovereignty.[a]

a "Strength is often expressed by the horn, wherein the strength of bulls and such like creatures consists; and by the arm, wherein human strength doth chiefly discover itself."—*Lowth.*

Ps. lxxv. 5, 10; La. ii. 3.

Cities of Moab.—And the cities of Moab have all disappeared. Their place, together with the adjoining part of Idumæa, is characterised in the map of *Volney's Travels*, by the ruins of towns. His information respecting these ruins was derived from some of the wandering Arabs: and its accuracy has been fully corroborated by the testimony of different European travellers of high respectability and undoubted veracity, who have since visited this devastated region. The whole country abounds with ruins. And Burckhardt, who encountered many difficulties in so desolate and dangerous a land, thus records the brief history of a few of them: "The ruins of Elcale, Heshbon, Meon, Medaba, Dibon, Aroer, still subsist to illustrate the history of the Beni Israel."

The armoury of a nation may be well stored with every part of the best armour which is possible to be provided, but it is of no practical

And it might with equal truth have been added, that they still subsist to confirm the inspiration of the Jewish Scripture, or to prove that the seers of Israel were the prophets of God, for the desolation of each of these very cities was the theme of a prediction. Everything worthy of observation respecting them has been detailed, not only in Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria*, but also by Seetzen, and, more recently, by Captains Irby and Mangles, who, along with Mr. Banks and Mr. Legh, visited this deserted district. The predicted judgment has fallen with such truth upon these cities, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab far and near, and they are so utterly broken down, that even the prying curiosity of such indefatigable travellers could discover among a multiplicity of ruins only a few remains so entire as to be worthy of particular notice. The subjoined description is drawn from their united testimony:—Among the ruins of El Aal (Elcale) are a number of large cisterns, fragments of buildings, and foundations of houses. At Heshban (Heshbon) are the ruins of a large ancient town, together with the remains of a temple, and some edifices. A few broken shafts of columns are still standing: and there are a number of deep wells cut in the rock. The ruins of Medaba are about two miles in circumference. There are many remains of the walls of private houses constructed with blocks of silex, but not a single edifice is standing. The chief object of interest is an immense tank or cistern of hewn stones, "which, as there is no stream at Medaba," Burckhardt remarks, "might still be of use to the Bedouins, were the surrounding ground cleared of the rubbish to allow the water to flow into it; but such an undertaking is far beyond the views of the wandering Arabs." There is also the foundation of a temple built with large stones, and apparently of great antiquity, with two columns near it.[b]

26—30. (26) **make . . drunken**,[a] God's judgments are represented as a cup of intoxication: ch. xxv. 15. **wallow**, or "reel from side to side."[b] "Fall plump down as drunkards do."[c] **in derision**, exposed to the scorn of his enemies. (27) **Israel . . thee**, Moab had made game of the calamities of the Jews. **among thieves**, so as to deserve such insult. Reference is intended to the fact that Moab had acted as a thief in seizing the country of Reuben.[d] (28) **like the dove**, wh. often makes its nest in the sides and roofs of caverns: Is. xvi. 1, 2. (29) **pride of Moab**, Is. xvi. 6. (30) **wrath**, in the sense of exceeding arrogancy. **lies . . effect**, or his strength shall not match his pride. "The nothingness of his lies," or boastings.

Pyrrhus and the philosopher.—When Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was making great preparations for his intended expedition into Italy, Cineas, the philosopher, took a favourable opportunity of addressing him thus: "The Romans, sir, are reported to be a warlike and victorious people; but if God permit us to overcome them, what use shall we make of the victory?" "Thou askest," said Pyrrhus, "a thing that is self-evident. The Romans once conquered, no city will resist us; we shall then be masters of all Italy." Cineas added, "And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?" Pyrrhus, not yet aware of his intentions, replied, "Sicily next stretches out her arms to receive us." "That is very probable," said Cineas, "but will the possession of Sicily put an end to the war?" "God grant us success in that," use there. It must be taken and 'put on' the warriors; each part in its right place and relation; and not only so, it must be used after it is put on, and used in the proper way and at the proper times, in order that its utility may be proved in the preservation and victory of the warrior over his foes. So with the armour of God. He has provided the best moral armour in the universe for His people. (See Eph. vi. 13—18.) It is in the armoury of the Scripture, the means of grace, and the Spirit's agency, but the soldier of the Cross must put it on, and use it in all courage and propriety, or he will not be victorious over his enemies, nor will the practical glory of the armour be manifest."—*John Bate.*

b Keith.

a "The ministers of the Divine justice are to make Moab drink of the wine-cup of God's fury, till terror deprives him of his senses. His sin had been that of magnifying himself against Jehovah by depriving the Reubenites of the country which God had taken fr. the Amorites to give them."—*Spk. Com.*

b Fuerst.

c "Shall be so afflicted by God's wrath as to *disgorge* all his past pride, riches, and vainglory, and

full in his shameful abasement."—*Fausset.*

d "Didst thou find Israel robbing thee, that whenever thou spakest of him thou skippest for joy? No. Israel did not rob thee, but thou hast taken advantage of his misery to spoil him."—*Wordsworth.*

e Cheever.

answered Pyrrhus, "and we shall make these only the forerunners of greater things, for then Lybia and Carthage will soon be ours; and these things being completed, none of our enemies can offer any farther resistance." "Very true," added Cineas, "for then we may easily regain Macedon, and make an absolute conquest of Greece; and, when all these are in our possession, what shall we do then?" Pyrrhus, smiling, answered, "Why then, my dear friend, we will live at our ease, drink all day long, and amuse ourselves with cheerful conversation." "Well sir," said Cineas, "and why may we not do all this now, and without the labour and hazard of an enterprise so laborious and uncertain?" Pyrrhus, however, unwilling to take the advice of the philosopher, ardently engaged in these ambitious pursuits, and at last perished in them.[e]

31—34. (31) **howl for Moab,** Is. xv. 5. **all Moab,** *comp.* "whole Palestina," Is. xiv. 31. **men of Kir-heres,** Is. xvi. 7, 11. (32) **vine of Sibmah,** Is. xvi. 8. **over the sea,** *i.e.* the Dead Sea. **sea of Jazer,** this must be a poetic fig., as Jazer lies in an upland valley, fifteen m. N. of Heshbon. The river of Jazer, a tributary of the Arnon, may be intended. (33) **joy,** *etc.*, Is. xvi. 10. (34) **Elealeh,** Is. xvi. 9. **Zoar,** Is. xv. 5. **as an heifer,** or trans. "even to the third Eglah."[a] **Nimrim,** Is. xv. 6.

a "Trans. 'Eglah Shelishiah;' 'fr. Zoar to Horonaim, even to the third Eglah;' several places seem to have borne the name of Eglah, and this is specified as the 'third Eglah.'"—*Lightfoot.*

The cities of Moab.—When the towns of Moab existed in their prime, and were at ease, when arrogance, and haughtiness, and pride prevailed among them, the desolation and total desertion and abandonment of them all must have utterly surpassed all human conception. And that such numerous cities, which subsisted for many ages, which were diversified in their sites, some of them being built on eminences, and naturally strong; others on plains, and surrounded by the richest soil: some situated in valleys by the side of a plentiful stream: and others where art supplied the deficiencies of nature, and where immense cisterns were excavated out of the rock, and which exhibit in their ruins many monuments of ancient prosperity, and many remains easily convertible into present utility, should have all fled away, all met the same indiscriminate fate, and be all desolate, without any to dwell therein, notwithstanding all these ancient assurances of their permanent durability, and their existing facilities and inducements for being the habitations of men, is a matter of just wonder in the present day, and had any other people been the possessors of Moab, the fact would either have been totally impossible or unaccountable. Trying as this test of the truth of prophecy is, that is the word of God, and not of erring man, which can so well and so triumphantly abide it. They shall cry of Moab, How is it broken down![b]

"So, where our wide Numidian wastes extend, sudden th' impetuous hurricanes descend, wheel through the air, in circling eddies play, tear up the sands, and sweep whole plains away; the helpless traveller, with wild surprise, sees the dry desert all around him rise, and, smother'd in the dusty whirlwind, dies."—*Addison.*

b Keith.

35—39. (35) **in the high places,** this would be the last relic of the national religion. When the temples were destroyed, worship would be kept up on the "high places."[a] (36) **like pipes,** or like the flutes used at funerals. Comp. Is. xvi. 11. (37) **bald . . clipped,** the usual signs of mourning. Is. xv. 2. **cuttings,** ch. xvi. 6, xli. 5, xlvii. 5. (38) **generally,** better, "nothing but lamentation everywhere." (39) **turned the back,** to flee away.

a Is. xvi. 12.

"'We find Arabs,' La Roque tells us from D'Arvieux, 'who have their arms scarred by the gashes of a knife, which they sometimes give themselves, to mark out to

Cuttings for the dead (*v.* 37).—The relations of the deceased

often testify their sorrow in a more serious and affecting manner, by cutting and slashing their naked arms with daggers. To this absurd and barbarous custom the Prophet thus alludes: "For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped; upon all hands shall be cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth." And again, "Both the great and the small shall die in the land; they shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves." It seems to have been very common in Egypt, and among the people of Israel, before the age of Moses, else he had not forbidden it by an express law: "Ye are the children of the Lord your God; ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead." Mr. Harmer refers to this custom, the "wounds in the hands" of the Prophet, which he had given himself, in token of affection to a person.[b]

40—43. (40) he, *i.e.* Nebuchadnezzar.[a] as an eagle, making an impetuous dash.[b] (41) Kerioth, trans. "the cities." surprised, taken by storm. (42) destroyed . . people, its national existence shall be ended. (43) fear, *etc.*, Is. xxiv. 17, 18.

Cities of Moab.—While the ruins of all these cities still retain their ancient names, and are the most conspicuous amid the wide scene of general desolation, and while each of them was in like manner particularised in the visions of the Prophet, they yet formed but a small number of the cities of Moab: and the rest are also, in similar verification of the prophecies, desolate without any to dwell therein. None of the ancient cities of Moab now exist as tenanted by men. Kerek, which neither bears any resemblance in name to any of the cities of Moab which are mentioned as existing in the time of the Israelites, nor possesses any monuments which denote a very remote antiquity, is the only nominal town in the whole country, and in the words of Seetzen, who visited it, "in its present ruined state it can only be called a hamlet:" "and the houses have only one floor." But the most populous and fertile province in Europe (especially any situated in the interior of a country like Moab) is not covered so thickly with towns as Moab is plentiful in ruins, deserted and desolate though now it be. Burckhardt enumerates about fifty ruined sites within its boundaries, many of them extensive. In general they are a broken down and undistinguishable mass of ruins; and many of them have not been closely inspected. But, in some instances, there are the remains of temples, sepulchral monuments, the ruins of edifices constructed of very large stones, in one of which buildings "some of the stones are twenty feet in length, and so broad that one constitutes the thickness of the wall:" traces of hanging gardens; entire columns lying on the ground, three feet in diameter, and fragments of smaller columns; and many cisterns cut out of the rock.[c]

44—47. (44) fleeth . . pit, a forcible way of declaring that none shall escape. (45) because . . force, or without force: they stand powerless. a fire, *etc.*, comp. Nu. xxi. 28, 29. corner, *i.e.* of the beard. crown, *etc.*, Nu. xxiv. 17.[a] (46) Chemosh, *v.* 7. (47) bring again, *comp.* ch. xlvi. 26, xlix. 6. 39.

Moab.—In a general description of the condition of the inhabitants of that extensive desert which now occupies the place

their mistresses what their rigour and the violence of love made them suffer.' From this extract we learn what particular part of the body received these cuttings. The Scripture frequently speaks of them in a more general manner." —*Harmer.*

b Paxton.

a "Nebuchadnezzar's rise seemed to be like that of the mighty eagle, spreading out his wings, feathered with the innumerable colours of the variegated masses which composed the Chaldæan host, sweeping over different countries, and striking fear in his flight." —*Stanley.*

b De. xxviii. 49; Je. xlix. 22; Eze. xvii. 3.

It is said of Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, that, after he had heard the confession of a wretched usurer, he gave no other absolution than this: "God be merciful to thee, if He please, and forgive thee thy sins, which I do not believe, and bring thee to eternal life, which is impossible."

c Keith.

a "The meaning is that the fire of war consumes both far and near, both hair and beard, *i.e.* everything that the fire can singe or destroy." —*Spk. Com.*

of these ancient flourishing states, Volney, in plain but unmeant illustration of this prediction, remarks, that the "wretched peasants live in perpetual dread of losing the fruit of their labours: and no sooner have they gathered in their harvest, than they hasten to secrete it in private places, and retire among the rocks which border on the Dead Sea." Towards the opposite extremity of the land of Moab, and at a little distance from its borders, Seetzen relates that "there are many families living in caverns;" and he actually designates them "the inhabitants of the rocks." And at the distance of a few miles from the ruined site of Heshbon there are many artificial caves in a large range of perpendicular cliffs, in some of which are chambers and small sleeping apartments. While the cities are desolate, without any to dwell therein, the rocks are tenanted. But whether flocks lie down in the former without any to make them afraid, or whether men are to be found dwelling in the latter, and are like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth, the wonderful transition, in either case, and the close accordance, in both, of the fact to the prediction, assuredly mark it in characters that may be visible to the purblind mind, as the word of that God before whom the darkness of futurity is as light, and without whom a sparrow cannot fall unto the ground. And although chargeable with the impropriety of being somewhat out of place, it may not be here altogether improper to remark that, demonstrative as all these clear predictions and coincident facts are of the inspiration of the Scriptures, it cannot but be gratifying to every lover of his kind, when he contemplates that desolation caused by many sins and fraught with many miseries, which the wickedness of man has wrought, and which the prescience of God revealed, to know that all these prophecies, while they mingle the voice of wailing with that of denunciation, are the word of that God who, although He suffers not iniquity to pass unpunished, overrules evil for good, and makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and who in the midst of judgment can remember mercy. And reasoning merely from the "uniform experience" (to borrow a term and draw an argument from Hume) of the truth of the prophecies already fulfilled, the unprejudiced mind will at once perceive the full force of the proof derived from experience, and acknowledge that it would be a rejection of the authority of reason as well as of revelation to mistrust the truth of that prophetic affirmation of resuscitating and redeeming import, respecting Ammon and Moab, which is the last of the series, and which alone now awaits futurity to stamp it with the brilliant and crowning zeal of its testimony: "I will bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the Lord. I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the Lord. The remnant of My people shall possess them. They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations."[b]

"The devastation was to reach the most elevated, and the most remote, parts of the country." —*Henderson.*

"Next night—a dreary night! Cast on the wildest of the Cyclades isles, where never human foot had mark'd the shore, these ruffians left me.... Beneath a shade I sat me down, more heavily oppress'd, more desolate at heart than e'er I felt before: when Philomela o'er my head began to tune her melancholy strain, as piteous of my woes; till by degrees, composing sleep on wounded nature shed a kind but short relief. At early morn, waked by the chant of birds, I look'd around for usual objects: objects found I none, except before me stretch'd the toiling main, and rocks and woods, in savage view, behind."—*Thomson.*

"Open rebukes are for magistrates and courts of justice. Private rebukes are for friends; where all the witnesses of the offender's blushes are blind, and deaf, and dumb." —*Feltham.*

[b] *Keith.*

CHAPTER THE FORTY-NINTH.

1—3. (1) Ammonites, the people settled north of the Moabites.[a] no heir, "in seizing Gilead the Ammonites acted as if the country had no rightful owner," or heir. their king, or Melcom, their god.[b] (2) Rabbah, Am. i. 14; comp. 2 Sa. xii. 26—30. daughters, smaller towns and villages. be heir, or victor. This was partly fulfilled in the time of the Maccabees. (3) Ai, an unknown town, prob. near Heshbon. hedges, or vineyard walls. Running anywhere for shelter.

Places of burial (*v.* 3).—The places of burial in the East are without their cities, as well as their gardens, and consequently their going to them must often be by their garden walls, not hedges. The ancient warriors of distinction, who were slain in battle, were carried to the sepulchres of their fathers: and the people often went to weep over the graves of those whom they would honour. These observations put together sufficiently account for this passage.[c]

4—6. (4) gloriest . . valleys, the country was cut into valleys by the streams flowing towards the Jordan. flowing valley, flowing now with the blood of the slain.[a] (5) right forth, without even making effort at resistance, so extreme will be your fear. gather up, rally the fugitives. (6) bring again, ch. xlviii. 47.

Zeal for God.—Do not the "work of God negligently" and idly: let not thy heart be upon the world, when thy hand is lift up in prayer; and be sure to prefer an action of religion in its place and proper season before all worldly pleasure, letting secular things, that may be dispensed with in themselves, in these circumstances wait upon the other; not like the patriarch who ran from the altar in St. Sophia to his table in all his pontificals, and in the midst of his office, to see a colt newly fallen from his beloved and much-valued mare Phorbante. More prudent and severe was that of Sir Thomas More, who being sent for by the king when he was at his prayers in public, returned answer, he would attend him when he had first performed his service to the King of kings. And it did honour to Rusticus, that when letters from Cæsar were given to him, he refused to open them till the philosopher had done his lecture. In honouring God and doing His work put forth all thy strength; for of that time only thou mayest be most confident that it is gained, which is prudently and zealously spent in God's service.[b]

7—11. (7) Edom, *comp.* Is. xxxiv. 5; Am. i. 11; Obad. Edom lay along the south of Judah, from the district of Moab to the Mediterranean. wisdom . . Teman, *comp.* Obad. 8. "Teman was a strip of land N.E. of Edom. It is here put for Edom generally."[a] counsel, suited for times of emergency. (8) dwell deep, turn your caravans into the very depths of the desert, for there is danger in the well-known tracts. Dedan, this people was noted for conducting caravans. (9) grape gatherers, Obad. 5. (10) secret places, even the hiding-places of Mt. Sier. his seed, *i.e.* the seed of Esau. (11) leave, *etc.*, the usual sign of mercy mingling with judgment.

Martin Luther's will.—In the last will and testament of this

a Ge. xix. 37, 38. For this prophecy comp. Zep. ii. 9; Am. i. 13—15. "This prophecy seems to have been occasioned by their aggressions and encroachments on the territory of Israel, E. of the Jordan, after the deportation of the ten tribes. The Ammonites were subdued by Nebuchadnezzar five years after the fall of Jerusalem."—*Wordsworth.*
b 1 Ki. xi. 5, 33; 2 Ki. xxiii. 13.
c *Harmer.*

a "The abundance of thy valley."—*Ewald.*
"In the riches of thy fat and plentiful valleys, which overflow with abundance of all things."—*Lowth.*
"With all the zeal which young and fiery converts feel, within whose heated bosoms throngs the memory of a thousand wrongs."—*Lord Byron.*
b *Jeremy Taylor.*

a *Gesenius.* "Its inhabitants were among those 'children of the East' famed for wisdom, because of their skill in proverbs and dark sayings."—*Spk. Com.*
b When God designs a people for destruction, He deprives them of that common prudence and,

foresight which are requisite for the due management of their affairs."—*Lowth.*

v. 11. *Dr. Blair*, iv. 446.

c Cheever.

a "The Idumæans proudly imagined that the terror with which the celebrity of their power had inspired those by whom they were surrounded, would secure them against any hostile attack."—*Henderson.*

v. 12. *Dr. R. W. Hamilton, Cong. Lec.* 431.

vv. 15—18. *J. Jowett, Lec.* 137.

v. 16. *Dr. Jamieson*, i. 393.

b Paxton.

a "From A.D. 536 onwards, Petra suddenly vanishes from the pages of history. It was unknown to the Arabs, was confounded by the Crusaders with an entirely different place, and only in the present century was its real site discovered by Burckhardt, and full details given of its splendid but desolate remains by Laborde."—*Spk. Com.*

b "When the Jordan swells in the time of harvests, the lions that lie in the thickets on the river-side, are raised out of their coverts, and infest the country."—*Lowth.*

eminent reformer, occurs the following remarkable passage:—"O Lord God, I thank Thee that Thou hast been pleased to make me a poor and indigent man upon earth. I have neither house, nor land, nor money, to leave behind me. Thou hast given me wife and children, whom I now restore to Thee. Lord, nourish, teach, and preserve them, as Thou hast me."[c]

12—16. (12) they . . cup, the Jews, who might be expected to escape judgments, if any nation did. (13) Bozrah, ch. xlviii. 24. (14) rumour, *etc.*, Obad. 1. (15) small . . heathen, Obad. 2. (16) dwellest . . rock, the cities of Edom were hewn in the sides of seemingly inaccessible rocks, and in this the people felt the utmost confidence and security.[a] nest . . eagle, Obad. 4.

Rock dwellings.—In this beautiful passage the Prophet strictly adheres to the truth of history. Esau subdued the original inhabitants of Mount Hor, and seized on its savage and romantic precipices. His descendants covered the sides of their mountains "with an endless variety of excavated tombs and private dwellings, worked out in all the symmetry and regularity of art, with colonnades and pediments, and ranges of corridors, adhering to the perpendicular surface." On the inaccessible cliffs, which, in some places, rise to the height of seven hundred feet, and the barren and craggy precipices which enclose the ruins of Petra, the capital of the Nebatæi, a once powerful but now forgotten people, the eagle builds his nest, and screams for the safety of his young, when the unwelcome traveller approaches his lonely habitation.[b]

17—22. (17) hiss, in mockery at the utter abasement of its pride. plagues, or distresses. (18) overthrow, *etc.*, Ge. xix. 25. neighbour cities, such as Admah and Zeboim.[a] (19) he, *i.e.* Nebuchadnezzar. swelling, or flood time.[b] appoint . . time, marg. "prevent me in judgment." (20) least . . flock, the weakest and humblest of the Chaldæan host. draw, or drag them about, as a lion would a sheep. (21) is moved, or quakes. (22) as eagle, ch. xlviii. 40.

Petra.—Petra, the ancient capital of Idumæa, hitherto wrapped up in the deep recesses of solitude, remained until lately unknown. Here was the cradle of commerce seventeen centuries ago; the emporium of northern Arabia, and the *entrepôt* between Palestine, and Syria, and Egypt. It was the birthplace of Balaam, and renowned for oracles and auguries; in it, as a stronghold, were deposited the treasures of the sultans of Egypt; and yet the name of Petra seemed to have become all but extinct with the declension of the Roman power in the East. Here is a town embosomed amid a fortress of mountains; utter desolation reigns over wonderful ruins, noble in decay, and sublime in their fall. Mount Hor, with Aaron's tomb, surmounts the city of desolations, the metropolis of moving sands, and a blighted desert. The entrance is from the east, through a deep gorge, or ravine, called *El syk*, and the river that supplied Edom flowed through this valley; the wall of rock is from four hundred to seven hundred feet high. The sides of this romantic chasm are clothed with tamarisk, wild fig, oleander, and the caper plant, the latter hanging in luxuriant festoons from cracks and crevices; the solitude is only disturbed by the screaming of eagles, hawks, owls,

and ravens, which congregate here in vast multitudes. The ruins burst on the eye of the astonished and bewildered traveller in all their awful magnificence. This amphitheatre of mountains is tinged with extraordinary hues, and is at once romantic and picturesque. Sepulchres and tombs; sculptures, in all the majesty of art, decorate these "everlasting hills;" more than two hundred and fifty sepulchres are chiselled in the rock. And this is Edom, the metropolis of Idumæa! The stupendous ruins the magnificent tombs, the amphitheatre, the columns, and capitals, obelisks, friezes—all attest the magnificence which once reigned in this mountain metropolis; a city of desolation, which even the bittern scarce disturbs, "lines of confusion, and stones of emptiness." The territory of the descendants of Esau is swept as by "the besom of destruction," and remains a miracle of evidence, as palpable as any monument in the history of time. Its eighteen cities are mouldered into dust, and the dwellers among the rocks, that "made their nests among the stars," are brought low. The attention and contemplation seemed to be here divided between the survey of "nature, who invites attention to her matchless girdle of rocks, wondrous as well for their colours as their forms, and the men who feared not to intermingle the works of their genius with such splendid efforts of creative power."[c]

23—27. (23) **Damascus**, principal city of Syria. **Hamath . . Arpad**, 2 Ki. xvii. 24. **fainthearted**, "the sinews are relaxed, unknit, thro' terror." **sorrow . . sea**, *i.e.* as on the sea.[a] (24, 25) **not left**, not spared in the time of general calamity. Damascus is a city noted for the beauty of its situation, etc.[b] **of my joy**, *i.e.* in which I delighted. (26) **therefore**, better, *surely*. (27) **fire**, Am. i. 4. **Ben-hadad**,[c] the name, prob., of a race or dynasty of kings of Syria.

Wreck—a scene of frenzy and distress.—

And now lash'd on by destiny severe,
With horror fraught the dreadful scene drew near!
The ship hangs hovering on the verge of death,
Hell yawns, rocks rise, and breakers roar beneath.
In vain, alas! the sacred shades of yore
Would arm the mind with philosophic lore;
In vain they'd teach us, at the latest breath,
To smile serene amid the pangs of death.
Even Zeno's self, and Epictetus old,
This fell abyss had shuddered to behold.
Had Socrates, for godlike virtue famed,
And wisest of the sons of men proclaim'd,
Beheld this scene of frenzy and distress,
His soul had trembled to its last recess!
O yet confirm my heart, ye powers above,
This last tremendous shock of fate to prove;
The tottering frame of reason yet sustain;
Nor let this total ruin whirl my brain!
In vain the cords and axes were prepared,
For now the audacious seas insult the yard:
High o'er the ship they throw a horrid shade,
And o'er her burst in terrible cascade.
Uplifted on the surge, to heaven she flies,
Her shattered top half buried in the skies;

"'Tis to be happy that we run after pleasures; and covet (*sic*) in every thing in our own proud will. But we, alas! mistake our happiness, and foolishly seek it where it is not to be found. As silly children think to catch the sun, when they see it setting at so near a distance. They travel on, and tire themselves in vain; for the thing they seek is in another world."—*Bishop Hickes.*

c Murray.

a Comp. Is. lvii. 20.

b "This ancient city was celebrated for its felicitous position, the exquisite beauty of its environs, the magnitude of its temple, and the wealth of its inhabitants."—*Henderson.*

c 2 Ki. xiii. 3.

"A ship that has been driven by wave and tempest far up on the beach, where no tide can ever come to lift her off, but that lies there, high and dry, seams gaping, sails rotting, spars falling, hated of earth, and driven out from the water, is not half so pitiable an object as a great man who by policy, policy, policy, has been carried out of the deep channels of honour, and lies all awreck upon the shore of good

men's opinions."—*Beecher.*

"The very rats, instinctively had quit it: there they hoist us, to cry to the sea that roar'd to us; to sigh to the winds, whose pity, sighing back again, did us but loving wrong."—*Shakespeare.*

Then headlong plunging thunders on the ground.
Earth groans! air trembles! and the deeps resound!
Her giant bulk the dread concussion feels,
And quivering with the wound, in torment reels.
Again she plunges! hark! a second shock
Tears her strong bottom on the marble rock!
Down on the vale of death, with dismal cries,
The fated victims shuddering roll their eyes
In wild despair, while yet another stroke,
With deep convulsion, rends the solid oak:
Till like the mine, in whose infernal cell
The lurking demons of destruction dwell,
At length asunder torn her frame divides,
And crashing spreads in ruin o'er the tides.[d]

d W. *Falconer.*

28, 29. (28) Kedar, ch. ii. 10. Hazor, a district in Arabia Petræa, divided into districts, each presided over by a petty chief. (29) curtains, or tent hangings. fear, *etc.*,[a] *Magor-missabib*, see ch. vi. 25.

Ambition.—What are all the vain and empty titles of honour, to the glorious and substantial privileges with which believers are dignified, and raised above all other men by Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God, and they are the sons of God also! He is the "Heir of all things," and they are joint-heirs with Christ! He reigns in glory, and they shall reign with Him! He sits upon the throne, and they shall sit with Him on His throne. Oh that believers did but understand their own happiness and privileges by Christ, they would never droop and sink under every small trouble as they do.[b]

a "The very noise of the enemies shall fright them, and bring a panic fear upon them."—*Lowth.*

b *John Flavel*, 1699.

30—33. (30) get . . off, or hurry hastily away. dwell deep, as *v.* 8. (31) arise, addressed to Nebuchadnezzar. without care, in the sense of its security. neither . . bars, *comp.* De. iii. 5; Eze. xxxviii. 11. (32) utmost corners, *see* ch. ix. 26. (33) dragons, or jackals; (ch. x. 22) or serpents.

Dragons.—It shall be a habitation for dragons (serpents). I laid his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. The evidence, though derived from testimony, and not from personal observation, of two travellers of so contrary characters and views as Shaw and Volney, is so accordant and apposite, that it may well be sustained in lieu of more direct proof. The former represents the land of Edom, and the wilderness of which it now forms part, as abounding with a variety of lizards and vipers, which are very dangerous and troublesome. And the narrative given by Volney, already quoted, is equally decisive as to the fact. The Arabs, in general, avoid the ruins of the cities of Idumæa, "on account of the enormous scorpions with which they swarm." Its cities, thus deserted by man, and abandoned to their undisturbed and hereditary possession, Edom may justly be called the inheritance of dragons.[a]

"He that enlarges his curiosity after the works of nature, demonstrably multiplies the inlets to happiness; therefore we should cherish ardour in the pursuit of useful knowledge, and remember that a blighted spring makes a barren year, and that the vernal flowers, however beautiful and gay, are only intended by nature as preparatives to autumnal fruits."—*Johnson.*

a *Keith.*

34—39. (34) Elam, the province of Elymais, part of Susiana, W. of Persia proper. (35) bow of Elam, this country was famed for its archers.[a] (36) the four winds, it is said that whirlwinds seem to blow from all quarters. "Wars and commotions are metaphorically denoted by winds." (37) dismayed, *etc.*, for confirmation of this prophecy, comp. Da. viii. 2, 27.

a Is. xxii. 6.

"The reason for the judgment on the Elamites does not appear. They do not seem, as

(38) destroy . . king, *i.e.* Elam would lose its independent sovereignty. (39) bring again, *comp.* ch. xlviii. 47.[b]

Pride.—

Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools.
Whatever nature has in worth denied,
She gives in large recruits of needful pride ;
For as in bodies, so in souls, we find,
What wants in blood and spirits fill'd with wind :
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself ; but, your defects to know,
Make use of every friend and every foe.[c]

a people, to have molested the Hebrews. It is possible that they may have been addicted to idolatry, and thus been distinguished from the Persians proper, whose religion in the main was monotheistic."—*Henderson.*

b Comp. Ac. ii. 9.

c Pope.

CHAPTER THE FIFTIETH.

1—3. (1) against, as before, better rend. *concerning*. This prophecy was given in the fourth year of Zedekiah : see ch. li. 59, 60.[a] (2) set . . standard, or flag, to call attention to the herald's message. Bel, Is. xlvi. 1. Merodach, or *Marduk*, the tutelary God of Babylon, Is. xxxix. 1. confounded, bec. unable to protect the city they were supposed to defend. (3) north, the district of Media.[b]

Sinners returning to God (*vv.*1—5).—I. In those days the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah, together, —so enmities are to be abolished. II. Going and weeping : going whither? weeping wherefore? going to Zion with tears of joy and gratitude. III. They seek the Lord their God. IV. They ask their way to Zion with their faces thitherward. V. Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant.[c]

Broken images (*v.* 2).—As it was generally believed that the divinity abandoned any figure or image which was mutilated or broken, this prophetic declaration may be considered as asserting the destruction of the idols. Such a sentiment still prevails among the heathen. Dr. Buchanan, who visited many Indian provinces at the commencement of the seventeenth century, mentions that a Polygar chief, about two hundred and fifty years before, had been directed by the god Ganesa to search for treasures under a certain image, and to erect temples and reservoirs with whatever money he should find. "The treasures were accordingly found, and applied as directed : the image from under which the treasures had been taken was shown to me, and I was surprised at finding it lying at one of the gates quite neglected. On asking the reason why the people allowed their benefactor to remain in such a plight, he informed me that the finger of the image having been broken, the divinity had deserted it : for no mutilated image is considered as habitable by a god."[d]

4—8. (4) come, or return. weeping, partly with joy at so unexpected an opportunity ; partly in penitence called forth by the sense of the Divine goodness and faithfulness. (5) faces thitherward, indicating set purpose to journey to Zion. per-

a B.C. 593.

b "The devastation of Babylon here foretold includes not only that by Cyrus, but also that more utter one by Darius, who took Babylon by artifice, when it had revolted from Persia, and mercilessly slaughtered the inhabitants, hanging 4,000 of the nobles; also the final desertion of Babylon owing to Seleucia having been built close by under Seleucus Nicanor."—*Fausset.*

c Gamma in 400 Skts.

d Burder.

a "As long as the sheep are in the fold, it is a trespass to attack them, and is punished as such. But Israel having

left the fold, has now no owner, and may therefore be maltreated with impunity."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Lead ye the way for the people, out of Babylon, as the he-goats press forward, and place themselves at the head of the flocks, and lead them to pasture."—*Wordsworth.*

vv. 4, 5. *J. Durham*, 177; *Dr. H. Hunter*, i. 23, ii. 306; *J. Cunningham*, ii. 150; *C. Bradley*, ii. 82.

v. 5. *J. Durham*, 214; *S. Reader*, 399; *G. Campbell*, 231; *Noah Hill*, 22; *J. Scott*, 27; *C. Bradley*, ii. 104; *H. Melvill*, ii. 155.

c H. Melvill, B.D.

petual covenant, Ne. viii. 38, x. 29. (6) on the mountains, where they sacrifice to their idols. resting place, Jehovah, the only true source of good. (7) devoured them, as wild beasts would wandering sheep. offend not, excusing themselves as being agents of Jehovah, who was angry with His people.[a] habitation of justice, *comp.* ch. xxxi. 23. (8) he goats, which go first, and lead the flock.[b]

Seeking, after finding (*v.* 5).—I. It must become a Christian to be always inquiring the way to Zion like one who knows he may be deceived, but—1. It is comforting to remember that we are not to stand or fall by human decision; 2. There are cases of depression in which one cause or another weaves darkness round a man, so that while his face is towards Zion he cannot perceive that he is on the road; 3. A Christian should never be too confident; 4. It follows that you ought to be imitating in asking as to the road to Zion: the dead; the living; the Bible; God; 5. It is a question not merely for beginners but for most advanced Christians; 6. It does not imply doubt so much as caution. II. We have the case of those who are certified as to the direction in which they are proceeding, by busying themselves in inquiries as to the way. 1. Christianity is that in which no man can be too advanced to study the alphabet; 2. There cannot be a worse symptom in an individual or congregation than a distaste for the elementary truths and facts of Christianity; 3. This then is the test: what here are simple truths simply delivered; for with the believer, what was glad news at the beginning is glad news to the end; 4. There must be real honesty of purpose: there is such a thing as asking the way to Zion with the face towards Babylon; 5. God gives more grace in proportion as that already given is improved.[c]

9—13. (9) assembly, *etc.*, the mixed armies of Medes, Persians, and their allies. from thence, *i.e.* by the great nations coming from the north. none . . vain, none of the warriors shall return without aiding in the conquest: or none of the arrows shall fail of their aim. (10) satisfied, with the abundance they bear away. (11) fat, big, corpulent, so proud. heifer at grass, who might eat her fill, indulge how she pleased.[a] (12) Omit the words. *shall be.* Babylon was to become the hindmost of the nations, a wilderness, *etc.* (13) Comp. ch. xix. 8, xlix. 17.

Merodach.—Merodach was a name, or a title, common to the princes and kings of Babylon, of which, in the brief Scriptural references to their history, two instances are recorded, viz., Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, who exercised the office of government, and Evil-Merodach, who lived in the days of Jeremiah. From Merodach being here associated with Bel, or the temple of Belus, and from the similarity of their judgments—the one bowed down and confounded, and the other broken in pieces—it may reasonably be inferred that some other famous Babylonian building is here also denoted; while, at the same time, from the express identity of the name with that of the kings of Babylon, and even with Evil-Merodach, then residing there, it may with equal reason be inferred that, under the name of Merodach, the palace is spoken of by the Prophet. And next to the idolatrous temple, as the seat of false worship which corrupted and destroyed the nations, it may well be

a Some render, "as a heifer threshing," which being unmuzzled would eat abundantly and become frisky.

a "Common happiness is sustained, not by great exertions, which are in the power of a few, and happen rarely even to them, but by great numbers doing every one a little, every one something in his particular province, to his particular neighbourhood. This is the way in which Providence intended society to be carried on, and beneficence to be exercised."—*Paley.*

imagined that the royal residence of the despot who made the earth to tremble and oppressed the people of Israel, would be selected as the marked object of the righteous judgments of God. And secondary only to the Birs Nimrood in the greatness of its ruins is the Mujelibé, or Makloube, generally understood and described by travellers as the remains of the chief palace of Babylon.[b]

14—16. (14) put . . array, post yourselves in good positions. (15) shout, as conquerors do. foundations, better, *buttresses*. (16) sower, so that even the fields shall not be tilled. "Grain was grown within the city wall sufficient to last for a long siege."[a] "Conquerors usually spare agriculturists."

Palace at Babylon.—The palace of the king of Babylon almost vied with the great temple of their god. And there is now some controversy, in which of the principal mountainous heaps the one or the other lies buried. But the utter desolation of both leaves no room for any debate on the question,—which of the twain is bowed down and confounded, and which of them is broken in pieces. The two palaces, or castles, of Babylon were strongly fortified. And the larger was surrounded by three walls of great extent. When the city was suddenly taken by Demetrius, he seized on one of the castles by surprise, and displaced its garrison by seven thousand of his own troops, whom he stationed within it. Of the other he could not make himself master. Their extent and strength, at a period of three hundred years after the delivery of the prophecy, are thus sufficiently demonstrated. The solidity of the structure of the greater as well as of the lesser palace, might have warranted the belief of its unbroken durability for ages. And never was there a building whose splendour and magnificence were in greater contrast to its present desolation. The vestiges of the walls which surrounded it are still to be seen, and serve with other circumstances to identify it with the Mujelibé, as the name Merodach is identified with the palace. It is broken in pieces, and hence its name Mujelibé, signifying overturned, or turned upside down. Its circumference is about half a mile; its height one hundred and forty feet. But it is "a mass of confusion, none of its members being distinguishable." The existence of chambers, passages, and cellars, of different forms and sizes, and built of different materials, has been fully ascertained. It is the receptacle of wild beasts, and full of doleful creatures; wild beasts cry in the desolate houses, and dragons in the pleasant palaces—"venomous reptiles being very numerous throughout the ruins." "All the sides are worn into furrows by the weather, and in some places where several channels of rain have united together, these furrows are of great depth, and penetrate a considerable way into the mound." "The sides of the ruin exhibit hollows worn partly by the weather." It is brought down to the grave, to the sides of the pit.[b]

17—20. (17) scattered sheep, dwelling in different parts of the Babylonish kingdom. "Like a flock driven and scared in all directions." king of Assyria, Shalmaneser. (18) have punished, in the destruction of Nineveh.[a] (19) habitation, or pasturage. Carmel, *etc.*, places noted for their rich pastures.[b] (20) those days, perhaps referring to the more distant times

"Thou doest no wrong in seeking a scar in a smooth skin."—*Lyly.*

b Keith.

a Aristotle.

"The happiness of life consists, like the day, not in single flashes (of light), but in one continuous mild serenity. The most beautiful period of the heart's existence is in this calm equable light, even although it be only moonshine or twilight. Now the mind alone can obtain for us this heavenly cheerfulness and peace."—*Richter.*

"Go, fix some weighty truth; chain down some passion; do some generous deed; teach ignorance to see, or grief to smile; correct thy friend, befriend thy greatest foe; or, with warm heart, and confidence divine, spring up, and lay strong hold on Him who made thee."—*Young.*

"A hundred mouths, a hundred tongues and throats of brass inspired with iron lungs."—*Virgil.*

b Keith.

a "At the taking of this city, the last king of Assyria was killed, and the seat and title of the empire removed to Babylon, wh. was

no longer called the Assyrian, but the Babylonian monarchy."—*Lowth.*

b Is. lxv. 10; Eze. xxxiv. 13, 14.

v. 20. *S. S. Pierce,* 2'5.

Happiness is like manna; it is to be gathered in grains and enjoyed every day. It will not keep, it cannot be accumulated, nor have we to go out of ourselves or into remote places to gather it, since it has rained down fr. heaven, at our very doors, or rather withinside them.

c Keith.

of the Messiah. not found, *comp.* Ps. x. 15, xxxviii. 36; Is. xli. 12.

Treasures of Chaldæa.—And after the incessant spoliation of ages, now that the end is come of the treasures of Chaldæa, the earth itself fails not to disclose its hidden treasures, so as to testify that they once were abundant. In proof of this an instance may be given. At the ruins of Hoomania, near to those of Ctesiphon, pieces of silver having (on the 5th March, 1812) been accidentally discovered, edging out of the bank of the Tigris, "on examination there were found and brought away," by persons sent for that purpose by the pacha of Bagdad's officers, "between six and seven hundred ingots of silver, each measuring from one to one and a half feet in length; and an earthen jar, containing upwards of two thousand Athenian coins, all of silver. Many were purchased at the time by the late Mr. Rich, formerly the East India Company's resident at Bagdad, and are now in his valuable collection, since bought by Government, and deposited in the British Museum." Amid the ruins of Ctesiphon "the natives often pick up coins of gold, silver and copper, for which they always find a ready sale in Bagdad. Indeed, some of the wealthy Turks and Armenians, who are collecting for several French and German consuls, hire people to go and search for coins, medals, and antique gems; and I am assured they never return to their employers empty-handed." as if all who spoil Chaldæa shall be satisfied, till even the ruins be spoiled unto the uttermost.[c]

21—24. (21) Merathaim, or *the rebels.*[a] This command is given to Cyrus and his allies. Pekod, or *visitation;* prob. a district of Babylonia, and here used as another symbolic name for Babylon.[b] (22, 23) hammer . . earth, Is. xiv. 4—6, 16, 17. desolation, *comp.* Re. xviii. 19. (24) snare, Cyrus took the city by surprise, by draining the Euphrates.

Destruction of Babylon by fire.—On the summit of the hill are "immense fragments of brick-work of no determinate figures, tumbled together, and converted into solid vitrified masses." "Some of these huge fragments measured twelve feet in height, by twenty-four in circumference; and from the circumstance of the standing brick-work having remained in a perfect state, the change exhibited in these is only accountable from their having been exposed to the fiercest fire, or rather scathed by lighting." "They are completely molten—a strong presumption that fire was used in the destruction of the tower, which, in parts, resembles what the Scriptures prophesied it should become, 'a burnt mountain.' In the denunciation respecting Babylon, fire is particularly mentioned as an agent against it. To this Jeremiah evidently alludes, when he says that it should be 'as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,' on which cities, it is said, 'the Lord rained brimstone and fire.' 'Her high gates shall be burned with fire, and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.'" "In many of these immense unshapen masses might be traced the gradual effects of the consuming power, which had produced so remarkable an appearance; exhibiting parts burnt to that variegated dark hue, seen in the vitrified matter lying about in glass manufactories; while, through the whole of these awful testimonies of the fire (whatever fire it was!) which, doubtless, hurled them from their

a This appears to be intended as a name for Babylon.

b "Because she is the land of *Merathaim,* or double rebellion, therefore she is the land of *Pekod,* or visitation; *i.e.* of punishment from God."—*Wordsworth.*

The falling masses bear evident proof of the operation of fire having been continued on them, as well after they were broken down as before, since every part of their surface has been so equally exposed to it, that many of them have acquired a rounded form, and in none can the place of separation from its adjoining one be traced by any appearance of superior fresh-

original elevation" (I will roll thee down from the rocks), "the regular lines of the cement are visible, and so hardened in common with the bricks, that when the masses are struck they ring like glass. On examining the base of the standing wall, contiguous to these huge transmuted substances, it is found tolerably free from any similar changes—in short, quite in its original state; hence," continues Sir Robert Ker Porter, "I draw the conclusion, that the consuming power acted from above, and that the scattered ruin fell from some higher point than the summit of the present standing fragment. The heat of the fire which produced such amazing effects must have burned with the force of the strongest furnace; and from the general appearance of the cleft in the wall, and these vitrified masses, I should be induced to attribute the catastrophe to lightning from heaven. Ruins by the explosion of any combustible matter would have exhibited very different appearances."[c]

25—28. (25) armoury, storehouse of weapons. God's weapons for the judgment of nations are war, famine, pestilence, disease, and death. (26) utmost border, *i.e.* even the hindmost parts of the army. Some refer it to the long distance from which the Median army came. storehouses, or granaries. as heaps, of corn, to be burnt as a bonfire.[a] (27) bullocks, fig. for her strong youths, or princes, magnates. (28) them that flee, esp. the Jews. of his temple, wh. the Chaldæans had destroyed.

Destruction of Babylon by fire.—The high gates of the temple of Belus, which were standing in the time of Herodotus, have been burnt with fire; the vitrified masses which fell when Bel bowed down rest on the top of its stupendous ruins. "The hand of the Lord has been stretched upon it; it has been rolled down from the rocks, and has been made a burnt mountain,"—of which it was further prophesied, "They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord." The old wastes of Zion shall be built; its former desolations shall be raised up: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. But it shall not be with Bel as with Zion, nor with Babylon as with Jerusalem. For as the "heaps of rubbish impregnated with nitre" which cover the site of Babylon "cannot be cultivated," so the vitrified masses on the summit of Birs Nimrood cannot be rebuilt. Though still they be of the hardest substance, and indestructible by the elements, and though once they formed the highest pinnacles of Belus, yet, incapable of being hewn into any regular form, they neither are nor can now be taken for a corner or for foundations. And the bricks on the solid fragments of wall, which rest on the summit, though neither scathed nor molten, are so firmly cemented, that, according to Mr. Rich, "it is nearly impossible to detach any of them whole," or, as Captain Mignan still more forcibly states, "they are so firmly cemented, that it is utterly impossible to detach any of them." "My most violent attempts," says Sir Robert Ker Porter, "could not separate them." And Mr. Buckingham, in assigning reasons for lessening the wonder at the total disappearance of the walls at this distant period, and speaking of the Birs Nimrood generally, observes, "that the burnt bricks (the only ones sought after) which are found in the Mujelibé, the Kasr, and the Birs Nimrood, the only

ness, or any exception from the influence of the destroying flame.

"The common course of things is in favour of happiness; happiness is the rule, misery the exception. Were the order reversed, our attention would be called to examples of health and competency, instead of disease and want."—*Paley.*

c Keith.

a "This metaphor describes the suddenness, ease, and completeness with which Babylon will be taken and spoiled; it will be like the conflagration of a barn of corn."—*Wordsworth.*

"Ariosto, in one of his romantic legends, tells us of a tree, many-branched, and covered with delectable bunches; but whoso shook that tree to win the fruit, found, too late, that not fruit, but stones of crushing weight, came down upon his head. The sensualities which fools call pleasure are such a tree: they who seek its fruit become its victims."—*S. Coley.*

"All men that have rambled after happiness have failed; neither learning, nor fame, nor wealth, nor pleasure, taken separately or jointly, could ever give it, without acting up to the height

and dignity of human nature, and getting a right set of principles for thought and practice; amongst which may be reckoned the love of justice, temperance, fortitude, and benevolence." — *Antoninus.*
b Keith.

three great monuments in which there are any traces of their having been used, are so difficult, in the two last indeed so impossible, to be extracted whole, from the tenacity of the cement in which they are laid, that they could never have been resorted to while any considerable portion of the walls existed to furnish an easier supply: even now, though some portion of the mounds on the eastern bank of the river" (the Birs is on the western side) "are occasionally dug into for bricks, they are not extracted without a comparatively great expense, and very few of them whole, in proportion to the great number of fragments that come up with them." Around the tower there is not a single whole brick to be seen.[b]

a Comp. Job xvi. 13.
b "The Babylonians were so discouraged by having lost some battles, that they retired within the walls of the city, and could not be induced to meet Cyrus again in the field." — *Henderson.*

29—32. (29) archers,[a] *v.* 14. (30) therefore, *etc.*, ch. xlix. 26. (31) most proud, *Heb.* "O pride." "O man of pride." Bab. is the personification of pride. (32) fire . . cities, Cyrus seems to have ravaged the Babylonian district for twenty years before taking Baylon itself.

The Almighty Deliverer (*vv.* 31—34).—I. God's vengeance on His enemies. II. His merciful interposition on behalf of His people. 1. An interesting title to be considered; 2. An important qualification referred to; 3. A convincing proof adduced; 4. A gracious fact declared.

a "Babylon has hitherto, by its ambition, kept the world in unrest: now by its fall men everywhere can dwell in security."— *Spk. Com.*

Is. xiv. 6—8.

33, 34. (33) refused . . go, therefore the strong arm of Jehovah must deliver them, by judgments on their enemies. (34) Redeemer, or Goël, avenger. the land, or earth.[a]

The strength of the Redeemer (*v.* 34).—I. These words suggest a difficulty: why does Israel so often suffer? 1. God does not display His strength at once in order to glorify it; 2. In order to make His people lay hold of it; 3. Hereby He chastens His people; 4. And instructs them; 5. And that He may show mercy to their oppressors. II. These words convey a blessed truth: 1. Consider the might of the enemies from whom He delivers them; 2. Consider the completeness of the deliverance; 3. Consider that He upholds to the end all whom He has redeemed. III. These words imply a terrible warning—1. To all who oppress God's people; 2. To all who reject His help.[b]

b Stems and Twigs.

35—40. (35) sword, symbol of war. wise men, *Magi*, Da. i. 4. (36) liars, impostors; the astrologers or soothsayers are referred to. dote,[a] or rave: talk idly, senselessly. (37) mingled people, mixed races,[b] many of whom had been brought to Babylon as captives, like the Jews. as women, divested of all manliness. (38) drought, better read here "a sword." Reference is to Cyrus emptying the bed of the Euphrates. idols, lit. *terrors.*[c] "Mere bugbears to frighten children with." (39) wild, *etc.*, Is. xiii. 21. (40) Sodom, *etc.*, Ge. xix. 25; Je. xlix. 18.

a D. *doten*, F. *radoter.*
b Or hired soldiers from the surrounding nations.
c "Many of their idols were huge and grotesque in appearance, and calculated to inspire beholders with terror."— *Henderson.*
"Fully to understand this passage, a person must see the frenzy of the heathen when they get a sight of their idols. Thus, when the

Babylon and prophecy.—This possibly refers to a circumstance attending the capture of the city by the Persians; but it more probably alludes to the physical condition of the country. The plain in which Babylon stands is exposed to long drought and intense heat in summer, so that the dry soil must have been at all times perfectly barren without artificial irrigation; but with such irrigation the ground is, even at this day, of unexampled fertility, except upon the wide-spread grit and debris of desolated cities. Therefore it was that the land exhibited one of the most extensive and complicated systems of irrigation that the world

ever saw. It was overrun with innumerable canals in all directions—the largest of them navigable and feeding others, diminishing in importance with their distance from the trunk. These, as well as the parent river, were bordered with an infinity of hydraulic machines, by which the water was raised and distributed into the fields and gardens. The same plan is still pursued, to a limited extent, at some spots in the immediate vicinity of the rivers. But it is now literally true of Babylon that "a drought is upon her waters, and they are dried up." Yet still the lines and ridges of innumerable canals remain, which enable the spectator to trace the general system, and to verify the ancient historians as well as the prophecies of Scripture: the whole being strongly calculated to show the extent to which human skill and industry were once employed in giving to this now desolate region that fertility for which it was in old times celebrated. This explanation seems to us to give much force to the present prediction, since there can be no country the subsistence of which more entirely depended upon a complicated system of irrigation. Wherever water is applied in this region (with the exception already made), the productive powers of the soil and climate cannot be exceeded; but where that is wanting, it becomes a naked desert.

41—44. (41) many kings, in the allied army under Cyrus. coasts, or remote parts. (42) cruel, Is. xiii. 17, 18. like a man, in orderly array, so as to seem like one great man moving on. (43) waxed feeble, so that he attempted no resistance. Compare the panic of Belshazzar, Da. v. 6. (44) like a lion, ch. xlix. 19.[a]

Predictions concerning Babylon.—The united testimonies, given without allusion to the prediction, afford a better than any conjectural commentary, such as previously was given without reference to these facts. While of Babylon, in general, it is said, that it would be taken from thence; and while, in many places, nothing is left, yet of the burnt mountain, which forms an accumulation of ruins enough in magnitude to build a city, men do not take a stone for foundations, nor a stone for a corner. Having undergone the action of the fiercest fire, and being completely molten, the masses on the summit of Bel, on which the hand of the Lord has been stretched, cannot be reduced into any other form or substance, nor built up again by the hand of man. And the tower of Babel, afterward the temple of Belus, which witnessed the first dispersion of mankind, shall itself be witnessed by the latest generation, even as now it stands, desolate for ever.—an indestructible monument of human pride and folly, and of Divine judgment and truth. The greatest of the ruins, as one of the edifices of Babylon, is rolled down into a vast, indiscriminate, cloven, confounded, useless, and blasted mass, from which fragments might be hurled, with as little injury to the ruined heap, as from a bare and rocky mountain's side. Such is the triumph of the word of the living God over the proudest of the temples of Baal.[b]

45, 46. (45) therefore, *etc.*, comp. ch. xlix. 20. (46) cry . . nations, "who shall be astonished at the unexpected downfall of so great a city, and so potent an empire."[a]

The spoiling of Chaldæa.—When the Romans under Heraclius

gods are taken out in procession, the multitudes shout, and the priests mutter and rave. The gestures are all distorted, and the devotees are affected with alternate sorrow or joy."—*Roberts.*

"As the ivy twines around the oak, so do misery and misfortune encompass the happiness of man. Felicity, pure and unalloyed felicity, is not a plant of earthly growth: her gardens are the skies."—*Burton.*

a "The comparison of the invader of Babylon to a lion coming up from the jungle of Jordan was very appropriate to Cyrus, who came forth from the bed of a river to take the city."—*Wordsworth.*

"Every human soul has the germ of some flowers within; and they would open, if they could only find sunshine and free air to expand in. I always told you, that not having enough of sunshine was what ailed the world. Make people happy, and there will not be half the quarrelling, or a tenth part of the wickedness there is."—*Mrs. Child.*

b *Keith.*

a *Lowth.*

Recent evidence is not wanting to show that,

wherever a treasure is to be found, a sword, in the hand of a fierce enemy, is upon it, and spoliation has not ceased in the land of Chaldæa. "On the west of Hilleh, there are two towns which, in the eyes of the Persians and all the Shiites, are rendered sacred by the memory of two of the greatest martyrs of that sect. These are Meshed Ali and Meshed Housien, lately filled with riches, accumulated by the devotion of the Persians, but carried off by the ferocious Wahabees to the middle of their deserts."

"Praise is the sacred attribute of heaven, 'tis ours alone, with humble, grateful hearts, t' employ the gracious instinct it bestows, to our own honour, happiness, and virtue: for happiness and virtue are the same."—*Francis.*

b Keith.

ravaged Chaldæa, "though much of the treasure had been removed from Destagered, and much had been expended, the remaining wealth appears to have exceeded their hopes, and even to have satiated their avarice." While the deeds of Julian and the words of Gibbon show how Chaldæa was spoiled—how a sword continued to be on her treasures—and how, year after year and age after age, there was rumour on rumour and violence in her land—more full illustrations remain to be given of the truth of the same prophetic word. And as a painter of great power may cope with another by drawing as closely to the life as he, though the features be different, so Gibbon's description of the sack of Ctesiphon, as previously he had described the sack and conflagration of Selencia (cities each of which may aptly be called "the daughter of Babylon," having been, like it, the capital of Chaldæa), is written as if, by the most graphic representation of facts, he had been aspiring to rival Volney as an illustrator of Scripture prophecy. "The capital was taken by assault; and the disorderly resistance of the people gave a keener edge to the sabres of the Moslems, who shouted with religious transport, 'This is the white palace of Chosroes; this is the promise of the apostle of God.' The naked robbers of the desert were suddenly enriched beyond the measure of their hope or knowledge. Each chamber revealed a new treasure, secreted with art, or ostentatiously displayed; the gold and silver, the various wardrobes and precious furniture, surpassed (says Abulfeda) the estimate of fancy or numbers; and another historian defines the untold and almost infinite mass by the fabulous computation of three thousand of thousands of thousands of pieces of gold. One of the apartments of the palace was decorated with a carpet of silk sixty cubits in length and as many in breadth (90 feet): a paradise, or garden, was depicted on the ground; the flowers, fruits, and shrubs, were imitated by the figures of the gold embroidery, and the colours of the precious stones: and the ample square was encircled by a variegated and verdant border. The rigid Omar divided the prize among his brethren of Medina: the picture was destroyed; but such was the intrinsic value of the materials, that the share of Ali alone was sold for 20,000 drachmas. A mule that carried away the tiara and cuirass, the belt and bracelets of Chosroes, was overtaken by the pursuers; the gorgeous trophy was presented to the commander of the faithful, and the gravest of the companions condescended to smile when they beheld the white beard, hairy arms, and uncouth figure of the veteran who was invested with the spoil of the great king."[b]

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-FIRST.

1—4. (1) that dwell, *etc.*, *i.e.* the inhabitants of the metropolis of the Chaldæans. Lit. "that dwell in the heart of my insurgents." destroying wind, ch. iv. 11. The metaphors used in this and succeeding verses are agricultural. (2) fanners, *comp.* ch. xv. 7.[a] (3) brigandine, ch. xlvi. 4. (4) in her streets, or, more generally, in her land.

What one sin will do.—There was but one crack in the lanthorn, and the wind has found it out, and blown out the candle. How great a mischief one unguarded point of character may cause us!

a The "vannus" of the Romans was a broad basket, into which the corn and chaff was received after thrashing, and then thrown towards the wind. The Jews used a

One spark blew up the magazine and shook the whole country for miles around. One leak sank the vessel and drowned all on board. One wound may kill the body. One sin destroy the soul. It little matters how carefully the rest of the lanthorn is protected, the one point which is damaged is quite sufficient to admit the wind; and so it little matters how zealous a man may be in a thousand things, if he tolerates one darling sin; Satan will find out the flaw, and destroy all his hopes. The strength of a chain is to be measured not by its strongest but by its weakest link. for if the weakest snaps, what is the use of the rest? Satan is a very close observer, and knows exactly where our weak points are; we have need of very much watchfulness, and we have great cause to bless our merciful Lord who prayed for us that our faith fail not. Either our pride, our sloth, our ignorance, our anger, or our lust, would prove our ruin unless grace interposed; any one of our senses or faculties might admit the foe, yea, our very virtues and graces might be gates of entrance to our enemies. O Jesus, if Thou hast indeed bought me with Thy blood, be pleased to keep me by Thy power even unto the end.[b]

5—9. (5) **forsaken**, better, *widowed*. **filled with sin**, *i.e.* with the punishments resulting from sin. (6) **flee**, *etc.*, ch. l. 8.[a] (7) **golden cup**,[b] setting off her poison, and enticing men to drink, heedless of the peril of so doing. Comp. ch. xxv. 15, 16. (8) **fallen**, Is. xxi. 9.[c] **take value**, "spoken ironically, and intimating that her ruin is irrecoverable."[d] (9) **skies**, or *clouds*.

Flee ye, etc. (*v.* 8).—When the Arabs have drawn upon themselves the resentment of the more fixed inhabitants of those countries, and think themselves unable to stand against them, they withdraw into the depths of the great wilderness, where none can follow them. Thus also very expressly M. Savary (tom. ii. p. 8): "Always on their guard against tyranny, on the least discontent that is given them, they pack up their tents, load their camels with them, ravage the flat country, and, loaded with plunder, plunge into the burning sands, whither none can pursue them, and where they alone can dwell." Is it not then most probable that the dwelling deep, mentioned in these words, means their plunging far into the deserts, rather than going into deep caves and dens, as has been most commonly supposed? This explanation is also strongly confirmed by verse 30. Flee, get you far off, dwell deep.[e]

10—13. (10) **Lord . . righteousness**, *i.e.* "their justification in their controversy with Babylon, the cruel enemy of God and His people."[a] (11) **make bright**, or sharpen. **shields** some render, *quivers*. **Medes**,[b] including the Persians. (12) **upon the walls**, better "against the walls." The text is most prob. a summons to the invaders. (13) **many waters**,[c] the turnings of the Euphrates, and the canals irrigating the land. **measure**, meted out as judgment on thy covetousness: or the term limit, to which it will be allowed to go.[d]

Duty of acknowledging God's mercies.—Consider—I. What is that word which we are now called to declare? 1. The agricultural; 2. The commercial; 3. The political; 4. The religious. II. In what manner should we declare them? 1. Let us acknowledge God in them; 2. We must adore Him for them; 3. By an-

shovel, and threw the corn and chaff against the wind.

The word *fan* comes to us from the Lat. *vannus*, through the Fr. *vanner*. And the winnowing shovel is the origin of the ladies' "*fan*."

"There is no malice like the malice of the renegade."—*Macaulay.*

b C, H. Spurgeon.

a Comp. Re. xviii. 4.

b "The cup in the hand of Babylon is a golden cup; she chooses such a cup, in order that men's eyes may be dazzled with the glitter of the gold, and may not inquire what it contains."—*Origen.*

c Re. xi. 8, xviii. 2.

d Lowth.

r. 5. Dr. J. Owen, xvi. 105.

e Harmer.

a Fausset.

b "The Medes, the Madai of Ge. x. 2, were a branch of the great Aryan family, who as conquerors had seized upon the vast regions extending from the Caspian Sea to the Eastern borders of Mesopotamia, but without being able to dispossess the Turanian

tribes who had previously dwelt there. They were divided into numerous clans, each with its own local chief, the leaders of the larger sections being those who are called kings." —*Spk. Com.*

c Re. xvii. 1, 15.

d Ewald.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

The true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations, to understand our duties towards heaven and man, to enjoy the present without any anxious dependence upon the future; not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears, but to rest satisfied with what we have, which is abundantly sufficient; for he that is so wants nothing.

"That wherein God Himself is happy, and the holy angels happy, and in the defect of wh. the devils are unhappy, that dare I call happiness. Whatsoever conduceth unto this may with an easy metaphor deserve that name; whatsoever else the world terms happiness is to me a story out of Pliny—an apparition, or real delusion, wherein there is no more of happiness than the name."—*Sir Thomas Brown.*

"An extreme rigour is sure to arm everything against it, and at length to relax into a supine neglect."—*Burke.*

ticipation bless God for the yet richer mercies which he has in reserve for us.[e]

Spoiling of Babylon (*v.* 13).—On taking Babylon suddenly and by surprise, Cyrus became immediately possessed of the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places. On his first publicly appearing in Babylon, all the officers of his army, both of the Persians and allies, according to his command, wore very splendid robes, those belonging to the superior officers being of various colours, all of the finest and brightest dye, and richly embroidered with gold and silver; and thus the hidden riches of secret places were openly displayed. And when the treasures of Babylon became the spoil of another great king, Alexander gave six minæ (about £15) to each Macedonian horseman, to each Macedonian soldier and foreign horseman two minæ (£5), and to every other man in his army a donation equal to two months' pay. Demetrius ordered his soldiers to plunder the land of Babylon for their own use. But it is not in these instances alone that Chaldæa has been a spoil, and that all who spoil her have been satisfied. It was the abundance of her treasures which brought successive spoliators. Many nations came from afar, and though they returned to their own country (as in formerly besieging Babylon, so in continuing to dispoil the land of Chaldæa), none returned in vain. From the richness of the country, new treasures were speedily stored up, till again the sword came upon them, and they were robbed. The prey of the Persians and of the Greeks for nearly two centuries after the death of Alexander, Chaldæa became afterwards the prey chiefly of the Parthians, from the north, for an equal period, till a greater nation, the Romans, came from the coasts of the earth to pillage it. To be restrained from dominion and from plunder was the exciting cause, and often the shameless plea, of the anger and fierce wrath of these famed, but cruel, conquerors of the world. Yet, within the provinces of their empire, it was their practice, on the submission of the inhabitants, to protect and not to destroy. But Chaldæa, from its extreme distance, never having yielded permanently to their yoke, and the limits of their empire having been fixed by Hadrian on the western side of the Euphrates, or on the very borders of Chaldæa, that hapless country obtained not their protection, though repeatedly the scene of ruthless spoliation by the Romans. The authority of Gibbon, in elucidation of Scripture, cannot here be distrusted, any more than that of the heathen historians. To use his words, "a hundred thousand captives, and a rich booty, rewarded the fatigues of the Roman soldiers," when Ctesiphon was taken, in the second century, by the generals of Marcus. Even Julian, who, in the fourth century, was forced to raise the siege of Ctesiphon, came not in vain to Chaldæa, and failed not to take of it a spoil; nor, though an apostate, did he fail to verify by his acts the truth which he denied. After having given Perisador to flames, "the plentiful magazines of corn, of arms, and of splendid furniture, were partly distributed among the troops, and partly reserved for the public service: the useless stores were destroyed by fire, or thrown into the stream of the Euphrates" (Gibbon). Having also rewarded his army with a hundred pieces of silver to each soldier, he thus stimulated them (when still dissatisfied) to fight for greater spoil. "Riches are the object of your desires? those riches are in the

hands of the Persians, and the spoils of this fruitful country are proposed as a prize of your valour and discipline." The enemy being defeated after an arduous conflict, "the spoil was such as might be expected from the riches and luxury of an Oriental camp; large quantities of silver and gold, splendid arms and trappings, and beds, and tables of massy silver."

"Content's a kingdom, and I wear the crown."—*Heywood.*

14—18. (14) Lord . . himself, Am. vi. 8. caterpillars, or locusts; Neh. iii. 15. lift . . shout, or sing over thee the vintage-song, as those who tread the grapes. (15, 16) made, *etc.*, comp. ch. x. 12, 13. (17, 18) every man, *etc.*, ch. x. 14, 15.

A plague of locusts—The Mormons are threatened with as many plagues as the Egyptians of old. The last grievance is the advent of locusts, which have committed great devastation. Their doings are thus described in the *Deseret News*:—"The mode of their operations in this city and neighbourhood has been very simple. After flying for a time at a very high altitude, numbers of them began on Sunday afternoon, the 5th, to fly low, and towards evening settled down, covering trees and every kind of vegetation, hanging in clusters from twigs and tender branches, and covering the ground under foot. Apple trees, pear trees, carrots, and corn seemed their favourite food; for they stripped them of every leaf in an incredibly short time. Peach trees suffered somewhat in the fruit, which was eaten clean away; but the leaves were mostly uninjured. Oats, barley, and wheat, where not ripe, suffered severely. It was a curious-looking spectacle to see apple trees stripped of everything except the fruit, and much of that eaten into the core on one side, after the voracious insects had cleansed them of leaves, in some instances devouring the tender twigs. There seems no way of successfully driving them off when they settle down in a locality. They can be dislodged from particular trees by kindling small fires of straw, a little damp, underneath, and shaking the branches. Then they will rise, and the smoke compels them to leave. They can also be caught in large quantities with bag nets or similar contrivances, in early morning, before the heat of the sun gives them that vitality which they possess during the day; or they can be so caught in a dull, cloudy day, when the sun is not shining, for then they keep near the ground. When thus caught, they are sometimes boiled and fed for hogs and poultry, the latter being particularly fond of them. One wheat field, nearly nine miles out, seemed literally alive with them, flitting in countless myriads just above the grain, their thin, gauze-like wings glistening in the sunlight."

v. 15. *Dr. J. Barrow*, iv. 391.

"The fountain of content must spring up in the mind; and he who has so little knowledge of human nature as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own dispositions will waste his life in fruitless efforts, and multiply the griefs which he purposes to remove."—*Johnson.*

If happiness were an attainment of the mind, to be acquired, as a science or an art is learned from the master, no place could contain the numbers that would flock to the school. But there is no such school; each must learn the lesson by himself.

"When I am pressed with thoughts about worldly or home cares, I take a Psalm, or a saying of Paul, and go to sleep on it."—*Luther.*

19—24. (19) portion, *etc.*, ch. x. 16. (20) battle axe, hammer:[a] the reference is to Cyrus. (21, 22) break in pieces, and so utterly ruin. (23) captains, Heb. *Pakah*, prob. the original of the title pasha. (24) render unto, bring upon Bab. retributive judgments.

God's mercy to His people (*v.* 20).—I. The extent of God's mercy to His chosen people. 1. They are constantly represented as a remnant: 2. For them God designs the richest mercy. II. The interest the Jews have in it. 1. We ought not to overlook this; 2. The promise should fill us with unutterable joy. III. The effect which the contemplation of it should produce on us. 1. humiliation; 2. Gratitude; 3. Affiance.[b]

[a] "The mace, or mall, was among the weapons used by the soldiers, and by the Assyrian monarchs themselves."—*Rawlinson.*

v. 20. *Dr. G. Lawson*, 31.

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

25—29. (25) destroying mountain, fig. for Babylon, which had been like a volcano. burnt mountain, *i.e.* one burnt out, whose fires are quenched, and which is left a mere useless ruin. (26) not . . stone, bec. the stones of volcanoes are unfit for building purposes. (27) Ararat, in Armenia, 2 Ki. xix. 37. Minni and Ashchenaz, also in Armenia. Ge. x. 3. captain, or satrap. rough caterpillars, or bristling locusts.[a] (28, 29) prepare, lit. *consecrate.* tremble, with its fear and confusion.

Locusts or caterpillars?—Some think locusts are meant instead of caterpillars; and one reason assigned is, that they "have the appearance of horses and horsemen." Others translate "bristled locusts." There are bristled caterpillars in the East, which at certain seasons are extremely numerous and annoying. They creep along in troops like soldiers, are covered with stiff hairs or bristles, which are so painful to the touch, and so powerful in their effects, as not to be entirely removed for many days. Should one be swallowed, it will cause death: hence people, at the particular season when they are numerous, are very cautious in examining their water vessels, lest any should have fallen in. In the year 1826, a family at Manipy had to arise early in the morning to go to their work, and they therefore prepared their rice the evening before. They were up before daylight, and took their food: in the course of a short time they were all ill, and some of them died during the day. The rice chatty was examined, and there were found the remains of the micutty, the rough caterpillar. Dr. Hawkesworth says, of those he saw in the West Indies, "their bodies were thick set with hairs, and they were ranging on the leaves, side by side, like files of soldiers, to the number of twenty or thirty together. When we touched them we found that their bodies had the qualities of nettles."

30—32. (30) forborn, *etc.*, in utter hopelessness and despair. bars are broken, all her fortresses, and chief defences. (31) one . . another, intimating the simultaneous entry of the enemy at different points.[a] (32) passages, poss. the *ferries*,[b] or the passages up from the river bank. reeds . . fire, a fig. designed to show how dry the river marshes had become. The reeds may have been formed into stockades on the river banks.[c]

Overthrow of Babylon.—It seems a contradiction to say that one post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his kingdom is taken (not at one end, as our translation says, but) at the extremity. Yet this was strictly true: for Babylon was taken at each end at the same time, so that the messengers who carried the news to the king at his palace in the middle of the city, did run to meet each other, as coming from opposite quarters.

33—35. (33) threshing floor, such were in the open air, the ground being trodden down hard by cattle.[a] time to thresh, or at the time when it is trodden. (34) devoured me, *i.e.* the Jewish nation, wh. is here introduced, complaining of the injuries inflicted on them by the Chaldæans. dragon, or serpent which swallows its prey whole. A sea monster. delicates, delicacies, treasures; dainty meats, Ge. xliv. 20. cast me out, keeping up the fig. of the overgorged animal. (35) my flesh,

a Gesenius.

b Roberts.

"I earn that I eat, get that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness, glad of other men's good, and content with my harm."—*Shakespeare.*

a Herodotus says that the extreme parts of the city were taken before they who dwelt in the middle of it were sensible of their danger.

b "At right angles with the river were the main streets, at the end of each of which were gates, and prob. steps leading down to the river, and so the people were carried across in boats."—*Spk. Com.*

c "After draining off the river, Cyrus burned the stockade of dense tree-like reeds on its banks, forming the outworks of the city fortifications. The burning of these would give the appearance of the marsh or river being itself on fire."—*Faussel.*

a "Near Jericho were no less than five such floors, all trodden by oxen, cows, and younger cattle, arranged in each case five abreast, and driven round in a circle, or

wh. Nebuchadnezzar, as a wild beast, devoured.[b] inhabitant, *marg.* remainder or posterity.

Babylon.—On the one side, near to the site of Opis, "the country all around appears to be one wide desert of sandy and barren soil, thinly scattered over with brushwood and tufts of reedy grass." On the other, between Bussorah and Bagdad, "immediately on either bank of the Tigris, is the untrodden desert. The absence of all cultivation,—the sterile, arid, and wild character of the whole scene, formed a contrast to the rich and delightful accounts delineated in Scripture. The natives, in travelling over these pathless deserts, are compelled to explore their way by the stars." "The face of the country is open and flat, presenting to the eye one vast level plain, where nothing is to be seen but here and there a herd of half-wild camels. This immense tract is very rarely diversified with any trees of moderate growth, but is an immense wild, bounded only by the horizon." In the intermediate region, "the whole extent from the foot of the wall of Bagdad is a barren waste, without a blade of vegetation of any description; on leaving the gates, the traveller has before him the prospect of a bare desert, a flat and barren country." "The whole country between Bagdad and Hillah is a perfectly flat and (with the exception of a few spots as you approach the latter place) uncultivated waste. That it was at some former period in a far different state, is evident from the number of canals by which it is traversed, now dry and neglected; and the quantity of heaps of earth covered with fragments of brick and broken tiles, which are seen in every direction.—the indisputable traces of former population. At present the only inhabitants of the tract are the Sobeide Arabs. Around, as far as the eye can reach, is a trackless desert." "The abundance of the country has vanished as clean away as if the 'besom of desolation' had swept it from north to south; the whole land, from the outskirts of Babylon to the farthest stretch of sight, lying a melancholy waste. Not a habitable spot appears for countless miles." The land of Babylon is desolate, without an inhabitant. The Arabs traverse it: and every man met with in the desert is looked on as an enemy. Wild beasts have now their home in the land of Chaldæa: but the traveller is less afraid of them.—even of the lion,—than of "the wilder animal, the desert Arab." The country is frequently "totally impassable." "Those splendid accounts of the Babylonian lands yielding crops of grain two or three hundredfold, compared with the modern face of the country, afford a remarkable proof of the singular desolation to which it has been subjected. The canals at present can only be traced by their decayed banks."[c]

36—40. (36) plead thy cause, ch. l. 34. dry . . sea,[a] poss. referring to the "great lake dug by Nitocris to receive the waters of the Euphrates." Prob. only the usual Oriental term for any large river, or great body of water. (37) heaps, or ruins: ch. l. 26, 39. (38) yell, or growl: "the Heb. word is an imitation of the actual sound." (39) heat, *i.e.* when flushed with confidence and security. drunken, or a drinking-bout, a carousal. a perpetual sleep, the sleep of death at the hands of their conquering enemy.[b] (40) lambs, *etc.*, all classes of society are here indicated.[c]

Babylon.—"The soil of this desert," says Captain Mignan, who rather in all directions, over the floor."—*Robinson.*

"Babylon is like a threshing-floor not trodden for a long time, but the time of harvest, when her citizens shall be trodden under foot, shall come."—*Calvin.*

"There shall be a clear riddance made of her inhabitants and their treasures, as the harvest clears the fields, and leaves them empty and bare."—*Lowth.*

b "Nebuchadnezzar had devoured Jerusalem, had treated her as ruthlessly as a crocodile does its prey, and for this cruelty he and Babylon are justly to be punished."—*Spk. Com.*

If you make transient objects, uncertain riches, or fleeting pleasures your chief good, prepare for disappointment.

"Our contentment is our best having."—*Shakespeare.*

c Keith.

a Lit. fulfilled in Cyrus's draining the river. Fig. in the exhaustion of the multitudes and wealth of Babylon.

b "The night in wh. the conquest of Babylon was effected, was during the great festival which

had been instituted in honour of the idols, and at which revelry of every description was indulged in to such a pitch that most of the inhabitants were more or less in a state of inebriation."—*Henderson.*

c Is. xxxiv. 6.

You may be the greatest man and the richest in the world; but if you are without Christ, you are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

d Keith.

a Is. xiii. 19.

"Babylon had been embellished with ornaments more than any city that we are acquainted with."—*Herodotus.*

b Comp. Is. viii. 7, xvii. 12, 13.

c Grotius.

d "Reference may be to the holy vessels taken out of the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, and placed in the temple of Bel."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 42. "This metaphor is in common use to show the overwhelming power of an enemy. 'Tippoo Saib went down upon his foes; like the sea he swept them all away.' 'True, true, the British

traversed it on foot, and who, in a single day, crossed forty water-courses, "consists of a hard clay, mixed with sand, which at noon became so heated with the sun's rays that I found it too hot to walk over it with any degree of comfort. Those who have crossed those desert wilds are already acquainted with their dreary tediousness even on horseback; what it is on foot they can easily imagine." Where astronomers first calculated eclipses, the natives, as in the deserts of Africa, or as the mariner without a compass on the pathless ocean, can now direct their course only by the stars over the pathless desert of Chaldæa. Where cultivation reached its utmost height, and where two hundredfold was stated as the common produce, there is now one wide and uncultivated waste; and the sower and reaper are cut off from the land of Babylon. Where abundant stores and treasures were laid up, and annually renewed and increased, fanners have fanned, and spoilers have spoiled them till they have emptied the land. Where labourers, shaded by palm trees a hundred feet high, irrigated the fields till all was plentifully watered from numerous canals, the wanderer, without an object on which to fix his eye but "stinted and shortlived shrubs," can scarcely set his foot without pain, after the noonday heat, on the "arid and parched ground," in plodding his weary way through a desert, a dry land, and a wilderness. Where there were crowded thoroughfares, from city to city, there is now "silence and solitude;" for the ancient cities of Chaldæa are desolations,—where no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.[d]

41—44. (41) Sheshach, ch. xxv. 26. praise . . earth, ch. xlix. 25.[a] (42) the sea, a fig. for the invading army.[b] (43) cities, related, or dependent cities. Poss. the reference may be to the inner and outer cities, the two parts into which Babylon was divided by the Euphrates.[c] (44) Bel, Is. xlvi. 1. swallowed up, poss. alluding to the sacrifices offered to this idol; more prob., to the treasures taken by the nation called after the name of this god.[d] flow together, in their pilgrimages to Bel's shrine. wall, *v.* 58.

Cities of Chaldæa.—While the ancient cities of Chaldæa are thus desolate, the sites of others cannot be discovered, or have not been visited, as none pass thereby; the more modern cities, which flourished under the empire of caliphs, are "all in ruins." The second Bagdad has not indeed yet shared the fate of the first. And Hillah—a town of comparatively modern date, near to the site of Babylon, but in the gardens of which there is not the least vestige of ruins—yet exists. But the former, "ransacked by massacre, devastation and oppression, during several hundred years,' has been "gradually reduced from being a rich and powerful city to a state of comparative poverty, and the feeblest means of defence." And of the inhabitants of the latter, about eight or ten thousand, it is said that "if anything could identify the modern inhabitants of Hillah as the descendants of the ancient Babylonians, it would be their extreme profligacy, for which they are notorious even among their immoral neighbours." They give no sign of repentance and reformation to warrant the hope that judgment, so long continued upon others, will cease from them; or that they are the people that shall escape. Twenty years have not passed since

towns in Chaldæa have been ravaged and pillaged by the Wahabees; and so lately as 1823, the town of Sheereban "was sacked and ruined by the Coords," and reduced to desolation. Indications of ruined cities, whether of a remote or more recent period, abound throughout the land. The process of destruction is still completing. Gardens which studded the banks of the Tigris have very recently disappeared, and mingled with the desert,—and concerning the cities also of Chaldæa the word is true that they are desolations. For "the whole country is strewed over with the debris of Grecian, Roman, and Arabian towns, confounded in the same mass of rubbish."[e]

45—49. (45) deliver .. soul, preserve his life from the perils of the time of judgment. (46) rumour, of the approach of the Chaldæan army. There would then be a year elapse, during which they would have opportunity for escape.[a] (47) therefore, the exiles should take warning from these events. (48) sing for Babylon, all nature shall rejoice at the downfall of the oppressor. All God's faithful servants shall be glad because of His judgments upon idolaters. (49) *Trans.* "Babylon also shall fall, O ye slain of Israel! Those also of Babylon shall fall, O ye slain of all the earth![b] Departed spirits of the slain are called to rejoice in Babylon's fall.

Desolation of Babylon.—But while these lie in indiscriminate ruins, the chief of the cities of Chaldæa, the first in name and in power that ever existed in the world, bears many a defined mark of the judgments of heaven. The progressive and predicted decline of Babylon the great, till it ceased to be a city, has already been briefly detailed. About the beginning of the Christian era, a small portion of it was inhabited, and the far greater part was cultivated. It diminished as Seleucia increased, and the latter became the greater city. In the second century nothing but the walls remained. It became gradually a great desert; and, in the fourth century, its walls, repaired for that purpose, formed an enclosure for wild beasts, and Babylon was converted into a field for the chase—a hunting-place for the pastime of the Persian monarchs. The name and the remnant were cut off from Babylon; and there is a blank, during the interval of many ages, in the history of its mutilated remains and of its mouldering decay. It remained long in the possession of the Saracens; and abundant evidence has since been given, that every feature of its prophesied desolation is now distinctly visible—for the most ancient historians bore not a clearer testimony to facts confirmatory of the prophecies relative to its first siege and capture by Cyrus, than the latest travellers bear to the fulfilment of those which refer to its final and permanent ruin. The identity of its site has been completely established. And the truth of every general and of every particular prediction is now so clearly demonstrated, that a simple exhibition of the facts precludes the possibility of any cavil, and supersedes the necessity of any reasoning on the subject. It is not merely the general desolation of Babylon,—however much that alone would have surpassed all human foresight,—which the Lord declared by the mouth of His Prophets. In their vision, they saw not more clearly, nor defined more precisely, the future history of Babylon, from the height of its glory to the oblivion of its name, than they saw and depicted fallen Babylon as now it lies, and as, in the nineteenth century

troops went like the sea upon Bhurtpore; the forts have been carried away.'" —*Roberts.*

"The noblest mind the best contentment has."—*Spenser.*

e Keith.

a "The first rumour of war denounced against the head of that empire shall be the year before the siege, when Cyrus and Nabonnidus (or Belshazzar) shall engage in a battle, and the latter shall be overcome, upon which defeat the conqueror should in the following year lay siege to the city itself."—*Lowth.*

b Henderson.

"What an object of wonder and awe is an old castle to a boyish imagination! Its height, how dreadful! up to whose mouldering edges his fear carries him, and hangs him over the battlements. What beauty in those unapproachable wallflowers, that cast a brightness on the old brown stones of the edifice, and make the horror pleasing."—*Wilson.*

Good men, like St. Gregory and Luther, have feared lest they should have their portion, like Dives, in this life; bad men, that they should not have it.

of the Christian era, it has, for the first time, been fully described. And now when an end has come upon Babylon, after a long succession of ages has wrought out its utter desolation, both the pen and the pencil of travellers who have traversed and inspected its ruins, must be combined, in order to delineate what the Word of God, by the Prophets, told from the beginning that that end would be.[c]

50—53. (50) go away, further away out of danger. Prepare even to return to Jerusalem by cherishing thoughts of that sacred city. (51) confounded, reproached. The exiles intimate their prostrate condition in Babylon, and the way in wh. they, and their God, were contemned.[a] (52) do judgment, by proving the powerlessness of Bel in the day of calamity. (53) mount . . heaven, in her pride and boasting. height . . strength, with allusion to her high and immense walls. 350 ft. high, according to Herodotus.[b]

Predictions concerning Babylon.—Truth ever scorns the discordant and encumbering aid of error: but to diverge in the least from the most precise facts would here weaken and destroy the argument; for the predictions correspond not closely with anything, except alone with the express and literal reality. To swerve from it is, in the same degree, to vary from them; and any misrepresentation would be no less hurtful than iniquitous. But the actual fact renders any exaggeration impossible, and any fiction poor. Fancy could not have feigned a contrast more complete, nor a destruction greater, than that which has come from the Almighty upon Babylon. And though the greatest city on which the sun ever shone be now a desolate wilderness, there is scarcely any spot on earth more clearly defined, and none could be more accurately delineated by the hands of a draftsman, than the scene of Babylon's desolation is set before us in the very words of the Prophets; and no words could now be chosen like unto these, which, for two thousand five hundred years, have been its "burden"—the burden which now it bears. Such is the multiplicity of prophecies and the accumulation of facts, that the very abundance of evidence increases the difficulty of arranging in a condensed form, and thus appropriating its specific fulfilment to each precise and separate prediction, and many of them may be viewed connectedly. All who have visited Babylon concur in acknowledging or testifying that the desolation is exactly such as was foretold. They, in general, apply the more prominent predictions; and, in minute details, they sometimes unconsciously adopt, without any allusion or reference, the very words of inspiration. Babylon is wholly desolate. It has become heaps—it is cut down to the ground—brought down to the grave—trodden on—uninhabited—its foundations fallen—its walls thrown down, and utterly broken—its loftiest edifices rolled down from the rocks—the golden city has ceased—the worms are spread under it, and the worms cover it, etc. There the Arabian pitches not his tent; there the shepherds make not their folds; but wild beasts of the desert lie there, and their houses are full of doleful creatures, and owls dwell there, etc. It is a possession for the bittern, and a dwelling-place for dragons: a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert; a burnt mountain; pools of water; spoiled, empty, nothing left, utterly destroyed; every one that goeth by is astonished, etc.[c]

"Content can soothe, where'er by fortune placed; can rear a garden in the desert waste."—*White.*

c Keith.

a "We lead here a life of shame. Daily the reproach is cast in our teeth that Bel has proved more mighty than Jehovah; and, as the possession of the sacred vessels seems to prove this, we are unable to answer the taunt, and shame covers our faces; for it is true that strangers have gone into the sanctuaries of the house of Jehovah, which only our high priests were permitted to enter."—*Spk. Com.*

b "On the cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar, still extant, are these words: 'In Babylon is the tower of my abode. . . . To make more difficult the attack of an enemy against Imgour-Bel, the indestructible wall of Babylon I constructed, a bulwark like a mountain. . . . . I built my palace for the wonder of the people, . . . it is proof against all attack.'"—*Wordsworth.*

"Worldly riches are like nuts: many clothes are torn in getting them, many a tooth broke in cracking them; but never a belly filled with eating them."—*Venning.*

c Keith.

54—58. (54) cry, the war cry ; ch. l. 22. (55) waves, the masses of her invading enemy pouring through her streets. (56) mighty men, *v.* 30. recompenses, *etc.*, ch. l. 29. (57) drunk, so incapable of defence.[a] wise men, Da. ii. 2. (58) broad walls, *Herodotus* says, 85 Eng. feet wide : *Strabo* says, 32 feet.[b] in the fire, in striving to put out the fire.

Walls of Babylon.—They were so broad that, as ancient historians relate, six chariots could be driven on them abreast ; or a chariot and four horses might pass and turn. They existed as walls for more than a thousand years after the prophecy was delivered ; and long after the sentence of utter destruction had gone forth against them, they were numbered among "the seven wonders of the world." And what can be more wonderful now, or what could have been more inconceivable by man, when Babylon was in its strength and glory, that the broad walls of Babylon should be so utterly broken that it cannot be determined with certainty that even the slightest vestige of them exists. "All accounts agree," says Mr. Rich, "in the height of the walls, which was fifty cubits, having been reduced to these dimensions from the prodigious height of three hundred and fifty feet" (formerly stated, by the lowest computation of the length of the cubit, at three hundred feet) "by Darius Hystaspes, after the rebellion of the town, in order to render it less defensible. I have not been fortunate enough to discover the least trace of them in any part of the ruins at Hillah ; which is rather an unaccountable circumstance, considering that they survived the final ruin of the town, long after which they served as an enclosure for a park ; in which comparatively perfect state St. Jerome informs us they remained in his time." In the sixteenth century they were seen for the last time by any European traveller (so far as the author has been able to trace), before they were finally so utterly broken as totally to disappear. And it is interesting to mark both the time and the manner in which the walls of Babylon, like the city of which they were the impregnable yet unavailing defence, were brought down to the grave, to be seen no more. "The meanwhile," as Rauwolf describes them, "when we were lodged there, I considered and viewed this ascent, and found that there were two behind one another" (Herodotus states that there was both an inner, or inferior, and outer wall), "distinguished by a ditch, and extending themselves like unto two parallel walls a great way about, and that they were open in some places, where one might go through like gates : wherefore I believe that they were the wall of the old town that went about them ; and that the places where they were open have been anciently the gates (whereof there were one hundred) of that town. And this the rather because I saw in some places under the sand (wherewith the two ascents were almost covered) the old wall plainly appear."[c]

59—64. (59) with Zedekiah, *marg.* in behalf of.[a] Seraiah was entrusted with a special copy of the prophecy to console the Jews in the Babylonian exile. Seraiah was the brother of Baruch, ch. xxxii. 12. quiet prince, *lit.*, prince of Menucha : or prince of the resting-place,[b] *i.e.* of those who waited upon the king in his bed-chamber. (60) evil, or calamity. (61) read, to some assembly of the captives. "Then see that thou read." (63) cast . . Euphrates, a symbolical act. We need not sup-

a Comp. the proverb, "They whom the gods would *destroy*, they first *dement*."

b "The walls were from 41 to 60 miles in circumference, and from 75 to 335 feet in height, at different parts. They formed a square, in each side of which were 25 gates leading into the city. Between these gates were 250 towers, so that it was considered to be impregnable." — Partly *Henderson*.

"Can any man say that the wild fowl in his grounds are his, which suddenly take their wings and fly away, and for awhile make a stay in another man's field, and thereby give a like property to the second as they did to the first? No more can any man call riches truly his, wh., like winged birds, shift their owners, and haste from one to another."—*Spurstowe*.

"Happy the man who, void of care and strife, in silken or in leather purse retains a good old shilling."—*Goldsmith*.

c *Keith*.

a "That is sent by Zedekiah to appease Nebuchadnezzar's anger at his revolt." —*Calvin*.

b "It was his business to ride forward each day, and select

the place where the king would halt and pass the night."—*Spk. Com.*

"The utility of riches consists not in the welfare of the individual, but in the general good of society. Whatever tends to loss of health, or comfort, or deterioration of morals, in the main body of the nation, is not wealth but poverty, notwithstanding any superficial splendour of things wherewith it may be combined."—*Quarterly Review.*

"Riches do not consist in having more gold and silver, but in having more in proportion than our neighbours; whereby we are enabled to procure to ourselves a greater plenty of the conveniences of life than comes within their reach, who, sharing the gold and silver of the world in a less proportion, want the means of plenty and power, and so are poorer."—*Locke.*

pose the roll to have been lost. Seraiah would draw it up again. (64) **thus far**, intimating that the next ch. is an appendix.

The cities of Babylon.—The course of the Tigris through Babylonia, instead of being adorned, as of old, with cities and towns, is marked with the sites of "ancient ruins." Sitace, Sabata, Narisa, Fuchera, Sendia "no longer exist." A succession of longitudinal mounds, crossed at right angles by others, mark the supposed site of Artemita, or Destagered. Its once luxuriant gardens are covered with grass; and a higher mound distinguishes "the royal residence" from the ancient streets. Extensive ridges and mounds (near to Houmania), varying in height and extent, are seen branching in every direction. A wall with sixteen bastions is the only memorial of Apollonia. The once magnificent Seleucia is now a scene of desolation. There is not a single entire building, but the country is strewed for miles with fragments of decayed buildings. "As far," says Major Keppet, "as the eye could reach, the horizon presented a broken line of mounds; the whole of this place was a desert flat." On the opposite bank of the Tigris, where Ctesiphon its rival stood, besides fragments of walls and broken masses of brickwork, and remains of vast structures encumbered with heaps of earth, there is one magnificent monument of antiquity, "in a remarkably perfect state of preservation," "a large and noble file of building, the front of which presents to view a wall three hundred feet in length, adorned with four rows of arched recesses, with a central arch, in span eighty-six feet, and above a hundred feet high, supported by walls sixteen feet thick, and leading to a hall which extends to the depth of one hundred and fifty-six feet," the width of the building. A great part of the back wall, and of the roof, is broken down; but that which remains "still appears much larger than Westminster Abbey." It is supposed to have been the lofty palace of Chosroes; but there desolation now reigns. "On the site of Ctesiphon, the smallest insect under heaven would not find a single blade of grass wherein to hide itself, nor one drop of water to allay its thirst." In the rear of the palace, and attached to it, are mounds two miles in circumference, indicating the utter desolation of buildings formed to minister to luxury. But, in the words of Captain Mignan, "such is the extent of the irregular mounds and hillocks that overspread the site of these renowned cities, that it would occupy some months to take the bearings and dimensions of each with accuracy."[c]

[c] *Keith.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SECOND.

1—3. (1) **Zedekiah**, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxiv. 18—20. (2) **Jehoiakim**, 2 Ki. xxiii. 34—37. (3) **anger . . Lord**, 2 Ki. xxiv. 3, 4.

Advice to a mother.—The first book read, and the last book laid aside by every child is the conduct of its mother. 1. First give yourself, then your child, to God. It is but giving Him His own. Not to do it is robbing God. 2. Always prefer virtue to wealth—the honour that comes from God to the honour that comes from men. Do this for yourself, do it for your child. 3. Let your whole course be to raise your child to a high standard. Do not sink into childishness yourself. 4. Give not heedless commands,

"The heathen mother takes her babe to the idol temple, and teaches it to clasp its little hands before its forehead, in the attitude of prayer, long before it can utter a word. As soon as it can walk, it is taught

but when you command require prompt obedience. 5. Never indulge a child in cruelty, even to an insect. 6. Cultivate sympathy with your child in all lawful joys and sorrows. 7. Be sure that you never correct a child until you know it deserves correction. Hear its story first and fully. 8. Never allow your child to whine or fret, or to bear grudges. 9. Early inculcate frankness, candour, generosity, magnanimity, patriotism, and self-denial. 10. The knowledge and fear of the Lord are the beginning of wisdom. 11. Never mortify the feelings of your child by upbraiding it with dulness; but do not inspire it with self-conceit. 12. Pray with and for your child, often and heartily. 13. Encourage all attempts at self-improvement. 14. Never deceive nor break a promise to a child. 15. Reprove not a child severely in the presence of strangers. 16. Remember that life is a vapour, and that you and your child may be called out of time into eternity any day.

4—11. (4) forts, or watch towers.[a] (5, 6) besieged, invested so closely that no provisions from outside could reach the inhabitants. (7) fled, *comp.* 2 Ki. xxv. 4. (8) pursued, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxv. 5. (9) land of Hamath, omitted in 2 Kings: comp. Je. xxxix. 5. (10) slew . . princes, ch. xxxix. 6. (11) put him in prison, this information is additional to that given us in 2 Kings.

A word about eyes.—Large eyes were admired in Greece, where they still prevail. They are the finest of all, when they have the internal look: which is not common. The stag or antelope eye of the Orientals is beautiful and lamping, but is accused of looking skittish and indifferent. "The epithet of stag-eyed," says Lady Wortley Montagu, speaking of a Turkish love-song, "pleases me extremely; and I think it a very lively image of the fire and indifference in his mistress's eyes." We lose in depth of expression, when we go to inferior animals for comparisons with human beauty. Homer calls Juno ox-eyed; and the epithet suits well with the eyes of that goddess, because she may be supposed, with all her beauty, to want a certain humanity. Her large eyes look at you with a royal indifference. Shakespeare has kissed them, and made them human. Speaking of violets, he describes them as being—

"Sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes."

This is shutting up their pride, and subjecting them to the lips of love. Large eyes may become more touching under the circumstance than any others, because of the field which the large lids give for the veins to wander in, and the trembling amplitude of the ball beneath. Little eyes must be good-tempered, or they are ruined. They have no other resource. But this will beautify them enough. They are made for laughing, and should do their duty.[b]

12—16. (12) tenth, comp. *seventh* of 2 Ki. xxv. 8.[a] served the king, or stood before him: implying that he was a courtier, or high officer. (13) burned, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxv. 9. Probably only the larger houses were burnt. (14) all the walls, to ensure that it could not again be made a centre of rebellion. (15, 16) Comp. 2 Ki. xxv. 11, 12. multitude, or of the *workmen*.[b]

Fire a good servant.—Fire is, in some degree, the universal instrument of all the arts and all the necessaries of life. In

to gather a few flowers or fruits, or put a little rice upon a banana-leaf, and lay them upon the altar before the idol god. As soon as it can utter the names of its parents, so soon it is taught to offer up its petitions before the images. Whoever saw a heathen child that could speak, and not pray? Christian mothers, why is it that so many children grow up in this enlightened land without learning to pray?" — *Vt. Chronicle.*

a "Erected by the besieging party for the double purpose of observing what was done by those defending the city, and of annoying them by discharging missiles upon them from the elevation which was thus afforded."—*Henderson.*

"Those eyes, those eyes, how full of heaven they are! When the calm twilight leaves the heaven most holy: tell me, sweet eyes, from what divinest star did ye drink in your liquid melancholy? Tell me, beloved eyes."—*Bulwer.*

b Leigh Hunt.

a In Heb. letters are used for numerals, and some of them are so much alike that confusion is easily made by copyists.

b "The object of

Nebuchadnezzar was to people Babylon, not with paupers but with men of a better class, artisans and workmen, who would enrich it. The expense of taking them to Babylon must have been considerable."—*Spk. Com.*

"He which medleth with that he hath not to do is compared to one that catcheth a dog by the ears, and dare neither hold him still nor let him go; so he can neither go forward for want of skill, nor backward for shame."—*Henry Smith.*

order that man should make continual use of this element, the Creator has caused it to mix in the air, the water, and all fat and oily substances. How very useful is all the combustible matter which supplies us with fuel. Without a sufficient provision of it, we should not only lose the greatest advantages, but we should be exposed to the greatest inconvenience. In winter, were it not for the fire which lights us, a great part of our time would pass in the most insupportable darkness. Deprived of that artificial light, our most agreeable amusements would cease at sunset. We should be obliged to remain motionless, or else to wander in darkness, with horror, in the midst of a thousand dangers. How melancholy our state would be, if in these long evenings we could neither enjoy the pleasures of society, nor make use of the resources of reading, writing, and working. Consider how unwholesome, and how little nourishment there would be in the greatest part of the food which the earth produces, if by means of fire they were not dissolved, softened, and prepared to a certain degree. And how should we be able to provide so many other necessaries and conveniences of life, if the workmen and artists did not procure them for us with the help of fire? Without that element, we should not be able to melt metals, to make them malleable, to refine them; to change sand into glass; or to give to lime the consistence of stone. Without fire nature and all its treasures would become useless, and would lose in our eyes the most of their charms.[c]

c Sturm.

17—23. (17—19) pillars, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxv. 13—15. (20) under the bases, "the bases were under the ten lavers;" so this would better read, "The twelve brazen bulls which were instead of bases."[a] to support the brazen sea. (21—23) pillars, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxv. 16, 17. (22) five cubits, 1 Ki. vii. 16.

a Lowth.

"To give pain is the tyranny, to make happy the true empire, of beauty."—*Steele.*

The finger as a measure.—In the same way do the people of the East speak of anything which is less in measure than a span. "What height are your pepper vines?" "About two fingers." "When the rice becomes five fingers in height we shall want more rain." That which is less than a finger is spoken of as a grain of rice; the next gradation is an *ellu, i.e.* gingelly seed; the next is a mustard seed; and the last an *anu, i.e.* an atom.[b]

b Roberts.

. 24—27. (24) Seraiah, 2 Ki. xxv. 18. (25) seven men, *comp.* "five men" of 2 Ki. xxv. 19. (26, 27) so . . land, 2 Ki. xxv. 20, 21.

A prison is a house of care, a place where none can thrive, a touchstone true to try a friend, a grave for one alive; sometimes a place of right, sometimes a place of wrong, sometimes a place of rogues and thieves, and honest men among.

Prison discipline.—A gentleman who visited the county gaol of Norfolk in 1818, gives the following interesting particulars of the advantages of inculcating habits of industry among the prisoners. He says: "On the ground floor of the felons' yard there are two work-rooms: in one were two shoemakers, and a lad who had been in a manner apprenticed to them. He had been more than once detected in crime, and bore a very bad character; from this, and from the character of his associates, his was considered almost a hopeless case. Upon his last conviction, the governor requested the magistrates to allow him to try the experiment of reformation by labour. At first he was unruly; but he has much improved, has learned to make shoes, and will, in the opinion of his instructor, be able to earn his livelihood at the time of his liberation. The governor and the turnkey remarked how much the lad had amended his behaviour

Mr. Martroos, a respectable Armenian gentleman, who died at Calcutta in the year 1816, directed by his

and conversation since he had been fully employed. In the other room, one weaver and two carpenters were employed, and were thankful for the opportunity of being so; and indeed it is a rule, to which my experience has not furnished an exception, that prisoners are always glad to work; and are more orderly and manageable—are less exposed to contamination: in short, in prison, and when they leave it, are less vicious when employed than when idle. In these opinions the gaoler fully coincided. He said, 'Work is the best governor of a prison: it prevents dissension and attempts to escape, it takes away half the trouble and half the danger;' and he would wish to employ his prisoners, and pay them accordingly, though the labour produced nothing. They are allowed one-third of their earnings—half at the time if they require it, and half at the expiration of the sentence. An account is kept with each of them. I observed that the boy described above had already a credit of 19s.; another man had received nearly £7, and had instructed two others to make shoes."[a]

28—30. (28) three . . twenty, *comp.* 2 Ki. xxiv. 14, 16. (29) eighteenth year, when Nebuc. raised the siege of Jerus., to march against the king of Egypt. He then sent all the captive Jews in his camp away to Babylon. (30) three and twentieth year, when Nebuc. laid siege to Tyre.

Count Ugolino and his children.—Ugolino, a Florentine count, with his four children, was thrown into a dungeon by Archbishop Ruggieri. The horrors which he was here doomed to encounter have given a melancholy celebrity to his name. "The hour," says he, "approached, when we expected to have something brought us to eat; but instead of seeing any food appear, I heard the door of that horrible dungeon more closely barred. I beheld my little children in silence, and could not weep; my heart was petrified. The little wretches wept; and my dear Anselmo said, 'Father, you look on us! What ails you?' I could neither weep nor answer, and continued swallowed up in silent agony all that day, and the following night, even till the dawn of day. As soon as a glimmering ray darted through the doleful prison, that I could view again those four faces in which my own image was impressed, I gnawed both my hands with grief and rage. My children, believing I did this through eagerness to eat, raising themselves suddenly up, said to me, 'My father, our torments would be less if you would allay the rage of your hunger upon us.' I restrained myself, that I might not increase their misery. We were all mute that day, and the following. The fourth day being come, Gouldo, falling extended at my feet, cried, 'My father! why do you not help me?' and died. The other three expired one after another, between the fifth and sixth day, famished, as thou seest me now! and I, being seized with blindness, began to go groping upon them with my hands and feet: and continued calling them by their names three days after they were dead; then hunger vanquished my grief."[a]

31—34. (31) Evil-merodach, son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. lifted . . head, fig. for cheered and encouraged him, by giving him liberty, and some kindly notice.[a] (32) kings, *i.e.* the other captive kings kept to grace the court. (33) eat bread, *i.e.* take his place as an official of the palace. (Comp.

will that a considerable sum should be applied by his executors to the relief of poor prisoners confined in gaol for small debts. One twelfth part of the entire sum left, amounting to 2,106 rupees, was immediately appropriated to the payment of the debts of unfortunate persons confined in prison; in consequence of wh., one hundred and eight persons obtained their liberation.
a Percy Anec.

"It was a shrewd saying of the old monk, that two kinds of prisons would serve for all offenders in the world — an Inquisition and a Bedlam. If any man should deny the being of a God, and the immortality of the soul, such a one should be put into the first of these—the Inquisition—as being a desperate heretic; but if any man should profess to believe these things, and yet allow himself in any known wickedness, such a one ninhould be put to Bedlam."—*Tillotson*

"Satiety comes of riches, and contumaciousness of satiety."—*Solon.*

a Percy Anec.

a "Evil-Merodach is said in Jewish tradition to have formed an acquaintance with Jehoiachin

while they were companions in prison; Nebuchadnezzar having put his son in prison for a time."—*Fausset.*

b "This change of condition, vouchsafed at Babylon by God's mercy, even to Jehoiachin, after the terrible maledictions denounced against him, and after a long exile and captivity of 37 yrs., was like a presage of comfort and mercy from God Himself, and was a prelude and a pledge of the liberation and exaltation of the Jewish nation, when it had been humbled and purified by the discipline of suffering, and of its return to its own land."—*Wordsworth.*

c Percy Anec.

2 Sa. ix. 7, 11.) (34) **continual diet,** or daily provision for the maintenance of himself and his attendants.[b]

Francis I.—When Francis, after having performed prodigies of valour and of personal courage, and after having two horses killed under him, was taken prisoner at the battle of Pavia, he was conducted captive to the celebrated convent of Carthusian friars at Pavia. He sent to his mother, Louisa of Savoy, Regent of France in his absence, the melancholy news of his captivity, conceived in these dignified and expressive terms, "Tout est perdu, madame, hormis l'honneur." From Pavia, Francis was conducted to Madrid, where he was closely confined, and treated with great indignity, contrary to the advice given to Charles the Fifth by one of his counsellors, the Bishop of Osma, who advised his sovereign to present Francis with his liberty, with no other condition annexed to it than that of becoming his ally, urging that it would be an act of generosity worthy of so great a monarch. Francis suffered extremely from his imprisonment, and would most probably have died from it had not his sister, the Queen of Navarre, visited him in his wretched and solitary state. So much did this behaviour endear his sister to him, that he always called her "son âme," "sa mignon;" and notwithstanding his over-strict and bigoted attachment to the Church of Rome, he permitted her to become a Prostestant, without interfering with her religious opinions. When Francis was at length released from his imprisonment, and after he had crossed in a boat the small river Fontarabia, which divides Spain from France, he mounted a fleet Arabian courser that was brought him, and drawing his sword, cried out in a tone of transport and exultation, "I am still a king!"[c]

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

Introduction.

(*For General Introduction see commencement of Prophecies of Jeremiah.*)

This Book is a kind of appendix to the Prophecies of Jeremiah, of which, in the original Scriptures, it formed a part. It expresses with pathetic tenderness the Prophet's grief for the desolation of the city and temple of Jerusalem, the captivity of the people, the miseries of famine, the cessation of public worship, and the other calamities with which his countrymen had been visited for their sins. The leading object was to teach the suffering Jews neither to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor to faint when rebuked of Him, but to turn to God with deep repentance, to confess their sins, and humbly look to Him alone for pardon and deliverance. No Book in Scripture is more rich in expressions of patriotic feeling, or of the penitence and trust which become an afflicted Christian. The form of these poems is strictly regular, with the exception of the last. They are in the original Hebrew alphabetical acrostics, in which every stanza begins with a new letter. The third has this further peculiarity, that all the three lines in each stanza have the same letter at the commencement. As a composition this Book is remarkable for the great variety of pathetic images it contains: expressive of the deepest sorrow, and worthy of the subject which they are designed to illustrate (*Angus*).

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

This Book, which in our Bible is divided into five chapters, consists of five distinct Elegies.

Elegy I.—A Lamentation of the sad reverse of fortune which the country had experienced, and a confession that the miseries were well deserved.

Elegy II.—A melancholy detail of the dire effects of the Divine anger in the subversion of the civil and religious constitution of the Jews.

Elegy III.—The inexhaustible mercies of God are set forth as the never-failing source of consolation, and an exhortation to patience.

Elegy IV.—A contrast between the present deplorable condition of the nation and their former flourishing affairs.

Elegy V.—An epilogue to the previous Elegies. This chapter is in some versions entitled "The Prayer of Jeremiah."

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **solitary**, alone ; without her inhabitants.[a] **as a widow**, "cities are often described as the mothers of their inhabitants, and their kings and princes as their husbands." **nations . . provinces**, the surrounding kingdoms, *e.g.* Philistines, Edomites, *etc.* **tributary**, the word here means bond-servants. "Her only function now is to be a vassal unto others." (2) **weepeth sore**, Je. xiii. 17.[b] **lovers**, or allied states. **dealt treacherously**, utterly failing her in the hour of her need.[c] (3) **Judah**, *etc.*, Je. lii. 27. **affliction . . servitude**, their breaking the Mosaic law in relation to setting at liberty the slaves, was one great sign and proof of their rebelliousness. **straits**, a metaphor taken from hunting : driven into a corner.[d]

The fire at Chicago.—Mr. Banchor relates that when the Chicago fire had so far died out as to admit of investigation amongst the heaps of ruins, a search was made on the spot where stood the Western News Company's establishment. An enormous stock of periodicals, Bibles, and various books had been consumed, and in turning over the debris, a leaf of a quarto Bible was found charred and tinder, and upon it was the first chapter of Jeremiah, which opens with the above words. This, he adds, "was all the literature saved from the great depot." *Become as a widow.*—Jerusalem had been sacked by a ruthless foe, and her sons had been carried off to Babylon. "As a widow." When a husband dies, the solitary widow takes off her marriage jewels, and other ornaments ; her head is shaved ; and she sits down in the dust to bewail her lamentable condition. In the book *Scanda Purāna*, it is said, after the splendid city of Kupera had been plundered by the cruel Assurs, "the city deprived of its riches by the pillage of the Assurs, resembled the widow !" Jerusalem became as a widow in her loneliness bemoaning her departed lord.[e]

4—6 (4) **ways**, *i.e.* highways leading from the country districts to Jerusalem. **mourn**, bec. none journey on them to the solemn feasts.[a] Grass-grown roads and streets may, figuratively, be said to be in mourning. **her gates**, those of Zion. **virgins**, "who took a prominent part in all religious festivals."[b] (5) **chief**, masters over her.[c] **prosper**, *lit.* "are at rest," so crushed is Zion, that they have no fear of her renewing her rebellion. **children . . enemy**, driven before them like a flock of slaves.[d] (6) **beauty**, that of her temple, palaces, and walls. **harts**, or deer.

An old man's sorrow.—

Careful, sorrowing,
He seeth in his son's bower
The wine-hall deserted,
The resort of the wine noiseless,
The knight sleepeth ;
The warrior, in darkness.
There is not there
Noise of the harp,

a Jerusalem is described as a widow woman, sitting sad and pensive, on the ground, the position often taken by mourners.

b "The darkness or solitude of the night doth naturally promote melancholy reflections."—*Lowth.*

c Comp. **2 Ki.** xxiv. 2.

d "Image from robbers, who, in the E., intercept travellers at the narrow passes in hilly regions."—*Fausset.*

v. 3. ***J. C. Dieteric,*** 635.

e ***Roberts.***

a For the joy of these journeys comp. the Psalms of Degrees, cxx.—cxxxiii.

b Ex. xv. 20; **Ps.** lxviii. 25; **Je.** xxxi. 13.

c De. xxviii. 44.

d "In ancient sculptures such mournful processions of women and tender children are often engraved."—*Spk. Com.*

"The sorrows which the soul endures, not self-inflicted, are but hooded joys, that

when she touches the white strand of heaven, they cluster round her and slip off their robes, and laugh out angels in the world of light."—*J. Stanyan Bigg.*

Joy in the dwellings,
As there was before.
Then departeth he into songs,
Singeth a lay of sorrow,
One after one :—
All seemed to him too wide,
The plains and the dwelling-place.[e]

e *John M. Kemble.*

7—9. (7) remembered, better, remembers. In her afflicted state she thinks over the past, with the bitterness *of regret.*[a] when, better, after which. mock . . sabbaths, wh. seemed to the heathen a mere excuse for idleness. (8) removed, or she is as a thing which men remove from their sight. She is become an abomination. sigheth, "over the infamy of her deeds thus brought to open shame." backward, as if she would hide herself. (9) skirts, wh. were as if rolled in the mire.[b] last end, *comp.* De. xxxii. 29. down wonderfully, Is. xlvii. 1; Je. xlviii. 18.

a "The bitterest ingredient in the cup of adversity is the remembrance of lost possessions and enjoyments."—*Henderson.*

The action of the memory in pain (*v.* 7).—A word or two on the place of memory. I. It generally refers to the pleasant things of the past; this by a law of its nature, the law of contrast. 1. Life has its pleasant things; 2. Life has its painful things. II. That its reference to the pleasant things of the past always intensifies the sufferings of the sufferer. Two things tend to this. 1. The consciousness that the pleasant things are irrevocably lost; 2. That they have been morally abused; memory involves receptivity, retention, reproduction.[c]—*The wicked surprised by their own destruction* (*v.* 10).—It will at once be unexpectedly dreadful, and dreadfully unexpected. 1. This will appear from the fact that God's wrath against the wicked is constantly accumulating; 2. Because in the present life God's wrath, for the most part, seems to slumber; at least they perceive no direct expression of it; 3. Because they have been in this life receiving so many expressions of Divine goodness; 4. Because the wicked are often distinguished for worldly prosperity; 5. Because they have in some way or other made a confident calculation of escaping it.[d]

b "None could stain our glory if we did not stain it ourselves."—*Mat. Henry.*

c *U. R. Thomas.*

"Let never day nor night unhallow'd pass, but still remember what the Lord hath done."—*Shakespeare.*

d *Dr. W. B. Sprague.*

10, 11. (10) pleasant things, prob. with special reference to the sacred vessels of the temple.[a] not enter, De. xxiii. 3. (11) pleasant things, here, their jewels and treasures. relieve the soul, or "cause the breath to return;" *i.e.* refresh a fainting person with food. vile, *i.e.* treated as vile. There is no penitence in the expression.

a 2 Chr. xxxvi. 10.

Pleasant things for food.—What a melancholy picture have we here! The captives, it appears, had been allowed, or they had concealed, some of their "pleasant things," their jewels, and were now obliged to part with them for food. What a view we also have here of the cruelty of the vile Babylonians! The people of the East retain their little valuables, such as jewels, and rich robes, to the last extremity. To part with that which has, perhaps, been a kind of heirloom in the family, is like parting with life. Have they sold the last wreck of their other property; are they on the verge of death; the emaciated members of the family are called together, and some one undertakes the heartrending task of proposing such a bracelet, or armlet or anklet, or ear-ring, or the pendant of the forehead, to be sold. For a moment all are silent, till the mother or daughters

"What man should learn is, to reject all that is useless in remembrance, and to retain with cheerfulness all that can profit and amend. Forget not thy sins, that thou mayest sorrow and repent; remember death, that thou mayest sin no more; remember the judgment of God, that thou mayest justly fear; and never forget His mercy,

burst into tears, and then the contending feelings of hunger, and love for their "pleasant things," alternately prevail. In general the conclusion is, to pledge, and not to sell, their much-loved ornaments; but such is the rapacity of those who have money, and such the extreme penury of those who have once fallen, they seldom regain them. Numbers give their jewels to others to keep for them, and never see them more. I recollect a person came to the mission-house, and brought a large casket of jewels for me to keep in our iron chest. The valuable gems were shown to me one by one; but I declined receiving them, because I had heard that the person was greatly indebted to the Government, and was led to suspect the object was to defraud the creditors. They were then taken to another person, who received them, decamped to a distant part of the country, and the whole of the property was lost, both to the individual and the creditors.[b]

12—14. (12) **nothing . . by,**[a] as Zion sits in her desolateness and sorrow, she appeals to all who pass by to pity her woes. "As if the Prophet had said, Let any indifferent person judge, whether any calamity is like to mine."[b] (13) **fire,** or inflammation. **net,** image taken from hunting wild beasts. **turned me back,** to drive me into the nets. (14) **yoke,** an agricultural figure. **his hand,** as if He were the ploughman, who fastened firmly on the yoke. **wreathed,** *i.e.* the cords fastening the yoke are knotted together. **strength to fall,** under so heavy a yoke.

To those who pass by (*v.* 12).—We learn—1. That sin produces sorrow; 2. Sin deserves punishment; 3. The punishment due to our sins have been visited on Christ; 4. Christ being punished for our sins, sorrowed on account of sin; 5. It was the sorrow of innocence under the imputation of guilt; 6. Under the imputation of the sin of the whole world: 7. At the hands of one whom He termed His righteous Father; 8. It was voluntarily undertaken; 9. It was willingly endured; 10. It was patiently endured; 11. All this sorrow is now a part of history; 12. It is equally a matter of history that men are so much engrossed by the concerns of life that they are turned aside; 13. These are the passers by,—note them. Mr. Worldly Wiseman,—the votary of fashion, the sensualist. Is it nothing? It is something even now, it is something for ever.—*Christ's sufferings unparalleled* (*v.* 12). —1. No other could have had the same intensified sense of suffering; 2. Or the same cause of suffering; 3. Or the same absolute isolation in suffering: 4. Or ever encountered the same base ingratitude or malevolence; 5. No other sufferings ever attained the same glorious results; 6. Or will ever be followed by such dignity and joy to the illustrious sufferer.[c]

A pope's sermon.—At the Council of Lyons in A.D. 1245, Pope Innocent IV. one day mounted the pulpit in full attire, and gave out for his text, "See ye, who pass this way, was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow?" And compared his five afflictions—the desolations of the Mongols, the revolt of the Greek Church, the progress of heresy, the devastation of the Holy Land, and the persecutions of the emperor, to depose whom and to award the empire that council had been summoned—to the five wounds of Jesus. He wept himself; and the tears of others interrupted the Holy Father's discourse.[d]

that thou mayest never be led to despair."—*Petrarch.*

"Great abundance of riches cannot of any man be both gathered and kept without sin."—*Erasmus.*

b Roberts.

a "This sorrowful exclamation may, in a secondary and spiritual sense, be regarded as coming from the lips of Christ on the cross, bewailing the sins and miseries of the world, which caused Him that bitter anguish, of which alone it could be properly said, that 'no sorrow was like unto His sorrow.'"—*Wordsworth.*

b Lowth.

v. 12. *Bp. Andrews*, ii. 138; *H. Scougall*, 194; *R. Warneford*, i. 379; *Dr. J. Toulmin*, 375; *J. Newton*, iv. 260; *Bp. Mant*, i. 137; *C. Hawtrey*, 133; *H. Marriott*, iv. 371; *J. Archer*, ii. 202; *F. Close*, i. 50; *Dr. W. Wilson*, 157; *Dr. A. McCaul*, 351; *E. Blencowe*, ii. 205; *A. Gatty*, ii. 258.

c Dr. J. Burns.

d F. Jacox.

15—17. (15) trodden, *etc.*, by the might of the conquerors, the very soldiers were trampled down in the streets.[a] assembly, of armies; of enemies. young men, who are the strength and hope of a nation. as . . winepress, Is. lxiii 3. (16) mine eye, *etc.*, Je. xiii. 17, xiv. 17; La. ii. 18. This is the plaintive lamentation of Zion, the widow, as she sits solitary.[b] relieve, or revive. (17) spreadeth . . hands, in usual attitude of prayer, but of prayer under pressure of great distress.

Discipline of sorrow.—Sorrow is the noblest of all discipline. Our nature shrinks from it, but it is not the less for the greatness of our nature. It is a scourge, but there is healing in its stripes. It is a chalice, and the drink is bitter, but strength proceeds from the bitterness. It is a crown of thorns, but it becomes a wreath of light on the brow which it has lacerated. It is a cross on which the spirit groans, but every Calvary has an Olivet. To every place of crucifixion there is likewise a place of ascension. The sun that was shrouded is unveiled, and heaven opens with hopes eternal to the soul, which was nigh unto despair.[c]

18—20. (18) righteous, Da. ix. 7, 14. commandment, lit. *mouth*, *i.e.* message by His prophets. This is the expression of penitence. (19) lovers, *v.* 2. elders . . city, *i.e.* died of famine, while vainly seeking for food. (20) bowels, *etc.*, Is. xvi. 11; Je. xlviii. 36. turned, or violently agitated. as death, "pale pining forms, slowly wasting with hunger, and presenting the very image and appearance of death."[a]

False remedy for sorrows.—You that in your sorrows give yourselves to mirth and pastime, and merry meetings, thinking thereby to drive them away, you do rather increase and augment them. Just like the pelican, of whom it is reported that, being naturally afraid of fire, the shepherds are wont to carry some coals and lay them by her nest, and the poor silly creature keeps fluttering with her wings, thinking thereby to extinguish and put them out, but does but inflame and kindle them; and by this means the fire burns both her nest and self too. So, for us to go to worldly joys and pastimes to quench the sorrows and troubles of our minds, is the ready way rather to increase than remove them.[b]

21, 22. (21) called, or proclaimed. The day of judgments on the Babylonians;[a] the day of the capture of Babylon. (22) do . . me, some read, "Glean them as Thou hast gleaned me."

The day that will right all wrongs (*v.* 21).—In that day—1. God shall no longer be shut out of His own world; 2. Christ shall no longer be denied and blasphemed; 3. Evil shall no longer prevail; 4. Error shall give place to truth; 5. The saints shall no longer be maligned.[b]

Comfort in sorrow.—I say there is comfort, real and deep, in thinking that the path of sorrow we tread has been beaten smooth and wide by the feet of the best that ever trod this world; that our blessed Saviour was a Man of Sorrows: and that the best of His Church have been suffered to journey by no other path than that their Master went. It is not alone that the mourner travels through this vale of tears: Apostles and Prophets are of the company; saints and martyrs go with him: and the sorrowful face of the Great Redeemer, though sorrowful now no more, remains for ever with the old look of brotherly sympathy to His

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a "They fell not on the battle-field but in the heart of the city."—*Calvin.*
b Ex. ix. 29, 33; Je. iv. 31.
c. 17. "What a graphic view we have here of a person in distress! See that poor widow looking at the dead body of her husband, as the people take it from the house: she spreads forth her hands to their utmost extent, and piteously bewails her condition. The last allusion in the verse is very common."—*Roberts.*
c Il. Giles.

a Spk. Com. "The forms of expression used in this *v.* are strongly indicative of that violently excited state of the intestines which is occasioned by excessive grief. The whole verse is the most affecting imaginable."—*Henderson.*
v. 20. *Abp. Drummond*, 149.
b Christopher Love.

a Je. l. 1, 2, etc.

b Dr. H. Bonar.

"For his was not that open, artless soul, that feels relief by bidding sorrow flow; nor sought he friend to counsel or condole, whate'er his grief mote be, which he could not control."—*Byron.*

Content is the gift of heaven, and not the certain effect of anything upon earth; and it is

servants' eyes and hearts. Nothing hath come to us, nothing will come to us, but has been shared by better men. Search out the human being suffering the sharpest sorrow, and we can match it in the best of the Church of God.[c]

as easy for Providence to convey it without wealth as with it.

c Boyd.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—4. (1) **with a cloud**, a dark threatening thunder-cloud.[a] **beauty of Israel**, Solomon's temple. **footstool**, *i.e.* the ark.[b] (2) **habitations**, homesteads, with pastures. These are represented as destroyed by earthquake. **strongholds**, fortified towns. **polluted**, made the sacred land common or unclean, free to the invader. (3) **horn**, the symbol of power. God took away all power of defence. **drawn . . enemy**, better, "He set Himself—His right hand—as an adversary," comp. *v.* 4. (4) **pleasant to the eye**, all the chiefest in worth and dignity.

The footstool.—Those who are in favour with the king, or those who obey him, are called his footstool. But the figure is also used in a degrading sense. Thus, do two men quarrel, one says to the other, "I will make thee my footstool." "Ah! my lord, be not angry with me, how long have I been your footstool?" "I be that fellow's footstool! never! Was he not footstool to my father?"[c]

a "The Lord hath poured out His fury upon Zion, as in a tempest, and has dashed down her beauty as with lightning, and has not spared the ark of His sanctuary."—*Wordsworth.*

b 1 Chr. xxviii. 2; Ps. lxxx. i., xcix. 1, 5, cxxxii. 8.

c Roberts.

5—8. (5) **swallowed**, *comp.* Jer.'s likening Nebuchadnezzar to a lion. **increased**, or heaped it up. (6) **a garden**, *i.e.* no better than a mere garden. **feasts**, *etc.*, ch. i. 1. **despised . . priest**, *i.e.* shown no regard for even the most honourable offices. He made all to share in His judgments.[a] (7) **cast off**, *comp.* Ps. lxxxix. 38. 39. **made a noise**, their triumphant shouting on getting possession of the temple. (8) **stretched . . line**, Is. xxxiv. 11.

a "With the destruction of the city the royal authority fell; with the ruined temple and the cessation of the festivals the functions of the priest ceased."—*Spk. Com.*

Degrees of sorrow.—

First learn my grief, how fearful and how deep.
Starting, I woke from my childhood's rosy sleep,
The bud burst forth! a secret chill came o'er me,
The breath of love drew forth each hue so bright;
A hero raised me to his own proud height,
And life and all its charms lay spread before me.

"Already with the bridal myrtle crown'd
For him in whom my very being was bound,
I watch'd, with mingled fear and rapture glowing;
The marriage-torches cast their ruddy glare;
They brought me in his corpse and laid it there,
From seven deep wounds his crimson heart's blood flowing."

The second took the word with trembling tone:
"Oh, not of shame! of blood the form alone
That sleeping still or waking meets her view;
My heart too opened to that breath divine,
Anguish and rapture—they have both been mine;
For me the cup of love has mantled too.

"The glory vanish'd from the lov'd one's head;
I saw him selfish, mean, his brightness fled,

"The night of sorrow now is turn'd to day: her two blue windows faintly she upheaveth, like the fair sun, when in his fresh array he cheers the morn, and all the world relieveth: and as the bright sun glorifies the sky, so is her face illumined with her eye."—*Shakespeare.*

"My tree was thick with shade. Oh, blast! thine office do, and strip the foliage off, to let the heavens shine through."—*Ruckert.*

"The first sharp sorrow,—ay, the breaking up of that deep fountain, never to be seal'd till we with Time close up the great account." —*Caroline Bowles.*

b Madame de Pontes.

And yet, alas, I lov'd him!—him alone!
He went; if shame still chain him to her side,
Or raving madness drive him far and wide,
I know not; but the grief is all my own."

She ceased; the third then sadly took the word:

. . . . . .

"In one brief sentence all my sorrows dwell,
Till thou hast heard it, pause! consider well,
Ere yet the final judgment thou assign,
And learn my better right, too clearly proved.
Four words suffice me: I was never loved!
The palm of grief thou wilt allow is mine." [b]

a "The scene here depicted is presented in the most touching colours. The *liver*, denoting the *bile*, wh. is formed on the inferior surface of the liver, is copiously discharged when the passions are violently agitated."—*Henderson.*

9—12. (9) **sunk**, covered up with ruins and rubbish. **bars**, or defences. **among the Gentiles**, carried away captive. **law no more**, bec. there are none on whom to press its commands. "The civil and religious laws were one under the theocracy." (10) **elders**, setting the example of extreme grief. **virgins**, usually so regardful of personal adornment. (11) **swoon**, or faint.[a] (12) **to their mothers**, who could give them nothing. **as wounded**, dying a lingering, miserable death.

Treatment of sorrows and pleasure.—That which the French proverb hath of sickness, is true of all evils, that they come on horseback, and go away on foot: we have often seen a sudden fall, or one meal's surfeit hath stuck by many to their graves; whereas pleasures come like oxen, slow and heavily, and go away like post-horses, upon the spur. Sorrows, because they are lingering guests, I will entertain but moderately; knowing that the more they are made of, the longer they will continue: and for pleasures, because they stay not, and do but call to drink at my door, I will use them as passengers with slight respect. He is his own best friend, that makes least of both of them.[b]

In prosperity prepare for a change; in diversity hope for one.

b Bishop Hall.

13—16. (13) **take to witness**,[a] or, What prophetic testimony can I give thee? The Prophet had no consoling or comforting message to deliver. **equal to thee**, what instance of national calamity can compare with thine? **breach . . sea**, measureless, like the sea. (14) **foolish things**, delusions, Jer. xxiii. 26.[b] **discovered**, or declared to thee: not sought to bring thee to a true sense of thy sins. **false burdens**, or prophetic messages. **causes**, false reasons to account for your banishment;[c] or "drivings out."[d] (15) **clap their hands**, Job xxvii. 23, xxxiv. 37. **wag . . head**, 2 Ki. xix. 21: Ps. xliv. 14. **perfection of beauty**, Ps. xlviii. 2. (16) **opened . . mouth**, as wild beasts.

Clapping hands (*v.* 15).—Oriental females express their respect for persons of high rank by gently applying one of their hands to their mouths; a custom which seems to have existed from time immemorial. In some of the towns of Barbary, the leaders of the sacred caravans are received with loud acclamations, and every expression of the warmest regard. The women view the parade from the tops of the houses, and testify their satisfaction by striking their four fingers on their lips as fast as they can, all the while making a joyful noise. The sacred writers perhaps allude to this custom in those passages where clapping the hand in the singular number is mentioned. Striking one hand smartly

a "What can I bring forward as a witness or instance, to prove that others have sustained as grievous ills as thou? I cannot console thee as mourners are often consoled by showing that thy lot is only what others too suffer."—*Fausset.*

b Comp. Je. ii. 8. v. 31, xiv. 14, xxiii. 16.

c "The false prophets, in their attempts to account for the captivity, invented any cause but the true one, the apostasy of

upon the other, which we call clapping the hands, was also used to express joy, in the same manner as among ourselves; but in the East it appears to have been generally employed to denote a malignant satisfaction, a triumphant or insulting joy. In this way the enemies of Jerusalem expressed their satisfaction at the fall of that great and powerful city.[e]

17—19. (17) devised, purposed, and previously intimated.[a] (18) wall, appealing to the very wall, which was broken down, to join in weeping over the sorrows of the city.[b] river, or torrent. apple, *lit.* daughter, comp. Ps. xvii. 8. (19) cry out, in prayer. beginning . . watches, *i.e.* cry all the night through. young children, nothing could be more pitiable than to see these dying of hunger. top . . street, Is. li. 20.

Hunger—The last of a crew.—The brig *Tyrrel*, Captain Coghlan, in a voyage from Sandy Hook to Antigua, was wrecked on the 3rd of July, 1759. The crew, consisting of seventeen persons, embarked in the boat, which was only nineteen feet long and six broad. On the 16th, their whole stock of provisions and water being exhausted, only three persons of the seventeen now survived, the others had all perished by famine; and these were

"With hunger pinch'd,
Waiting the slow approach of death."

To them no hope, no prospects now remained, since

"All actual nourishment but air was wanting."

The mate, Purnell, the captain and the boatswain, the only persons remaining, attempted to eat part of a boy who had last died: but they could not swallow it, and the body was therefore thrown overboard. Early on the succeeding morning, the 18th of July, Purnell found both his companions dead and cold. Their melancholy fate taught him to anticipate his own dissolution; but though his body was feeble, yet his understanding was unimpaired, and his spirits as good as his deplorable situation would admit; and he never lost hopes of making land. On the 25th, having, in the meantime, been relieved by some barnacles on the rudder, he discovered a sail, which proved to be a schooner, commanded by Captain Castleman. Purnell was taken on board, and had a draught of water, the first he had tasted for twenty-three days. He was so weak that his life was despaired of, but by kind treatment and medical advice he recovered.[c]

20—22. (20) to whom, even to Thine own chosen and covenant people.[a] fruit, *i.e.* their own children. span long, or rend. "swaddled with their hands:"[b] *v.* 22. (21) young . . old, the slaughter was indiscriminate; a mere massacre of the population. (22) solemn day, or feast-day. Terrors come crowding round Zion, as people used to do at her festivals. The phrase, *Magor-missabib*, fear on every side, is found Je. vi. 25. swaddled,[c] bound or swathed; referred to the early dressing of infants.

Hunger—Faithful companion.—A Mr. Rogers and a Mr. Carr, both natives of Kentucky, were on their return from the Council Bluffs, on the margin of the Missouri, when the cold weather set in, accompanied with a deep fall of snow. Mr. Rogers being in a weak state of health, it was thought fittest to attempt to

the Jews."—*Henderson.*

d Je. xxvii. 10, 15.

e Paxton.

a Lev. xxvi. 14—39; De. xxviii. 15—68.

b For the bold figure comp. Is. xiv. 31; Je. xxii. 29; Hab. ii. 11; Lu. xix. 40.

"Violent fires soon burn out themselves."—*Shakespeare.* "The misfortune is, that, when man has found honey, he enters upon the feast with an appetite so voracious, that he usually destroys his own delight by excess and satiety."—*Knox.* "Every inordinate cup is unblest, and the ingredient is a devil." — *Shakespeare.* "Too much is stark nought."—*Welsh.* "One may be surfeited with eating tarts." "Gentleness does more than violence." — *French.* "Soon fire, soon ashes." — *Dutch.*

c Percy Anec.

a "This is a continuation of the pathetic appeal from the wall which surrounded Jerusalem, and which now lay in ruins on the ground."—*Wordsworth.*

b Comp. Le. xxvi. 29; De. xxviii. 56, 57; Je. xix. 9.

c A.-S. *swædhil*, *swedhil*, a bundle, from *swedhian*, to

bind. Swaddling-clothes are clothes bound tight round the body.

descend the stream, instead of traversing the forests. When one hundred and fifty miles from any settlement, the ice on the river prevented their descent: and no other alternative was left than to land, and leave Mr. Rogers in the woods, with some necessaries, till the return of his friend, who went in quest of relief. Carr, with difficulty, reached the settlement, and immediately returned to his helpless friend. After a toilsome search, and an absence of twenty-one days, Carr at length discovered the apparently lifeless body of Rogers. On approaching it, the narrative states, this faithful fellow traveller first observed a rise of snow, and many tracks of a wolf leading to it. With a palpitating heart he went up to it, and saw a piece of buffalo-robe sticking out; stooping down, he discovered the glistening eyes of his friend! He was still alive; but his feet much frozen. His fire had gone out, and in attempting to make more, his powder blew up. He was afraid his friend had been frozen, and, despairing of life, had rolled himself up in his buffalo robe, and lain down. He was eight days without any kind of food, and was so exhausted that, when the wolf stared him in the face, he was not able to make any exertion or noise to drive him away. Rogers was then conveyed to Hempstead, where he not only recovered his general health, but, strange to tell, the complete use of his limbs.[d]

"A bow overbent will weaken." "Extremes meet." "Too far east is west." "A baited cat may grow as fierce as a lion."—*English.*

"True contentment depends not upon what we have; a tub was large enough for Diogenes, but a world was too little for Alexander."—*Colton.*

d Percy Anec.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—6. (1) seen affliction, in the sense of suffering or experiencing it. Reference is rather to the suffering of the people, wh. he had personally shared. rod, *etc.*, Pr. xxii. 8. (2) darkness, the fig. for calamities.[a] (3) turneth his hand, in order to give a repetition of strokes. Lifts up his hand to strike again and again. (4) made old, worn out as with constant rubbing and chafing. broken my bones, Is. xxxviii. 13.[b] (5) builded, as besiegers build mounds. gall, or bitterness. travel, or travail, weariness. (6) dead of old, or for ever dead: "sequestered from human society, as if I were out of the world."

Negro slavery (*v.* 5).—1. In judging of this system of slavery we are to remember that we stand on the Christian ground: 2. So regarding it, we need not to hesitate to assert unconditionally that it is wrong, essentially so, for men to arrogate a property in fellow men; that there can be no such property; 3. This assumed property is a total violation of the natural equality of mankind; 4. What an odious system that must be in any case which renders religion, whether in practice or sentiment, a thing of aggravated difficulty; 5. Slavery necessarily causes a wretched moral degradation.[c]

Pitt lying in solitude.—Pitt died at a solitary house on Wimbledon Common. Not far off, by the roadside, stood a small country inn, where the various parties interested in the great statesman's life were accustomed to apply for information, and leave their horses and carriages. On the morning of the 23rd of January, 1806, an individual having called at the inn, and not being able to obtain a satisfactory reply to his inquiries, he proceeded to the house of Pitt. He knocked, but no servant appeared—he opened the door and entered—he found no one in attendance—he proceeded from room to room, and at length

a Is. lix. 9; Je. xiii. 16; Am. v. 20.

b "The anguish I feel in my mind is as painful as if all my bones were broken."—*Lowth.*

"Very prob. the Prophet draws much of what he says from his own experience, but the whole that he sets forth is more than his own personality; it is the type and pattern of every individual."—*Ewald.*

v. 1. *Dr. J. Donne*, v. 303.

v. 5. *J. Foster*, i. 306.

c J. Foster.

"The excesses of our youth are drafts upon our old age, payable with interest, about

entered the sick chamber, where, on a bed, in silence and in perfect solitude, he found, to his unspeakable surprise, the dead body of that great statesman who had so lately wielded the power of England, and influenced, if he did not control, the destinies of the world. We doubt whether any much more awful example of the lot of mortality has ever been witnessed.[d]

7—12. (7) **hedged**, Job iii. 23, xix. 8; Ho. ii. 6. **chains**, *lit.* chain of brass. (8) **shutteth out**, Job xxx. 20; Ps. xxii. 2. (9) **hewn stone**, *comp. v.* 5. **paths crooked**, compelling me to turn aside from the ordinary road.[a] (10) **bear . . lion**, the peril of those who take by-paths and forest-paths. (11) **pulled . . pieces**, as by these wild beasts. (12) **me as a mark**, Job vii. 20. Made me the mark or object of His indignation.

The sinner's hedges (*v.* 22).—I. There is the hedge of moral sense. II. Of social life. 1. Of social relationship; 2. Of social sentiment. III. Of personal incapacity. 1. The lack of physical health; 2. The lack of intellectual ability; 3. The lack of secular means.[b]

A heavy chain (*v.* 7).—This figure is taken from a prisoner having a heavy chain to drag as he goes along. Husbands sometimes speak of their wives as a chain. Thus, is a man invited to a distant country; he asks in reply, "How can I come? my wife has made my chain heavy." "My husband, my husband, you shall not go; my weeping shall make your chain heavy." A man in great trouble asks, "Who will break this sangale?" *i.e.* chain. "My chain, my chain, who will break this chain?" "Have you heard Varavar's chain is broken? He is dead! Who will make another chain for him."[c]

13—16. (13) **arrows . . quiver**, *lit.* "sons of his quiver;" an Hebraic figure.[a] (14) **derision**, Je. xx. 7. **their song**, Job xxx. 9. (15) **bitterness**, better pl., bitternesses. **wormwood**, De. xxix. 18. (16) **broken my teeth**, Pr. xx. 17.[b] **covered me**, *marg.*, "rolled me in;" better, "fed me with ashes."[c]

Grief of the Christian.—Beautiful is the spectacle of Christian grief, and strikingly observable is the difference between the blessedness of religion and the feeble consolations of philosophy. It is the pride and object of philosophy to render the human heart insensible to suffering. In this, however, happily for man, it seldom succeeds; and when it does, the character is brutalised, and more than half the benefit of life's discipline is lost, while, at the same time, the heart that has foolishly endeavoured to harden itself against suffering, becomes also insensible to joy, and loses those fine transitions from darkness to light, and from light to darkness, which, like the beauties of opening and closing day, constitute the great part of the glory and brightness of the moral landscape. Christianity, on the other hand, which is addressed to us as creatures liable to sorrow, and which is offered to man as a means of alleviation, and as a remedy of woe, seeks not to harden the mind against feeling, but rather permits the full feeling of sorrow, in order that the heart may receive the benefit of this essential part of the discipline wherewith heaven in its wisdom sees fit to exercise the children of men. Herein is seen the excellence of Christian principles, in that they recognise the use of afflictions, and render them subservient to the purposes of good.

nirty years after date."—*Colton.*

d Cheever.

a "He conceives of himself as a traveller whose way is blocked up by a solid wall, and who, being compelled to turn aside into the devious pathways of the forest, is exposed to the rapacity of wild beasts."—*Henderson.*

v. 8. *J. Sievewright*, 275.

b Ir. Thomas. "Small causes are sufficient to make a man uneasy, when great ones are not in the way; for want of a block, he will stumble at a straw."—*Swift.*

c Roberts.

a Comp. Job v. 7, xli. 28.

b "Keeping up the metaphor of *v.* 15, Jer. complains that his bread was so filled with grit that in eating it his teeth were broken."—*Spk. Com.*

c "We fare as hard as those who feed upon bread baked in ashes, whose teeth are in danger of being broke with grits and stones."—*Lowth.*

"He is happy whose circumstances suit his temper; but he is more excellent who can suit his temper to any circumstances."—*Hume.*

d Records of a Village Rectory.

17—21. (17) removed, *etc.*, l's. lxxxviii. 14. prosperity, or good. (18) said, or thought in my heart. strength . . Lord, Is. xl. 27. (19) remembering, better rend., *remember*. misery, or homelessness. (20) humbled, or bowed; sinks down as in a swoon. (21) this, which he is about to express in *vv.* 22—26; the unfailing quality of God's mercy.

The first grief.—It is a bitter consciousness (none can tell how bitter but those to whom it has been given) when we are wakened from our youthful dream of happiness by some stern reality, and know that from henceforth it may never be indulged again—when an all-powerful, though all-merciful hand has passed over the beautiful vision we so fondly cherished, and its dazzling colours have faded beneath the touch, and we see that the form is the same, but the lustre can never be recalled. We may have thought that our minds are ready for the change,—we may have pictured it to ourselves, and sorrowed for the inevitable hour, and even prayed for strength to bear it,—but the experience of one real grief will teach us what no preparation will impart. It will show us our own weakness, and the vastness of that mercy which stooped to share a nature endowed with such capacities for suffering. It will force us to look upon the unknown future with a chastened and a thoughtful eye; and whilst it bids us bear thankfully in our hearts the remembrance of our early joy, as the type granted us by God of the blessings reserved for us in heaven, it will tell us that from henceforth the warfare of human life must be ours: and that, till the grave has closed upon our heads, we may hope but for few intervals of rest."

22—25. (22) we . . consumed,[a] the Prophet speaks as representative of the people. compassions, Ps. lxxxvi. 15. (23, 24) portion, Ps. xvi. 5, lxxiii. 26, cxix. 57; Je. x. 16. (25) wait for Him, and so wait His time.

Man living by mercy (*vv.* 22, 23).—1. It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed bodily; 2. It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed intellectually; 3. It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed morally: dwell on the words consumption, mercy, morning.[b]

Jeremiah and the duke, a contrast.—Imagine the Prophet in his solitariness. All around him is widespread desolation: the once gorgeous palace is in ruins; the temple, adorned with gold and silver, and the richest tapestry, no longer graces the heights of Moriah, but is reduced to ashes; the favoured people are in exile; the Prophet is sorrowful and sad; yet, while the tear still glistens in his eye, and his bosom heaves with intense emotion, he exclaims, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope." How different is it with the man whose portion is earthly! It is said of a certain duke that he has a passion for costly diamonds; and what is the consequence? His house resembles a castle rather than a mansion, and is surrounded with a lofty wall, over which no one can climb without giving alarm. His treasure is kept in a safe, let in the wall of his bedroom, so that it cannot be reached without first waking or murdering the owner: the safe is so constructed that it cannot be forced without discharging four guns, and setting an alarm-bell a-ringing in every room. His bedroom, like a prisoner's cell, has but one small window, and the bolt and lock of the massive door are of the stoutest iron. In addition to these precautions, a case, con-

"No roses bloom upon my fading cheek, nor laughing graces wanton in my eyes; but haggard Grief, lean-looking, sallow Care, and pining Discontent—a rueful train—dwell on my brow, all hideous and forlorn."—*Rowe.*

"What a rich feast the canker grief has made; how has it suck'd the roses of thy cheeks! and drunk the liquid crystal of thy eyes!"—*Sewell.*

a Sewell.

a Mal. iii. 6.

v. 22. *Bp. Andrews*, iv. 261; *D. Wilcox*, i. 318; *H. Alford*, 160.

v. 24. *Dr. Dalgleish*, 3; *S. Lavington*, i. 165; *G. C. Davies*, 105.

b Dr. Parker.

"Consider this, Christians, that of all men in the world you have least cause, yea, no cause, to be murmuring and muttering under any dispensations that you meet with in this world (Lam. iii. 24; Eph. iii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4). Is not God thy portion? Chrysostom propounds this question, 'Was Job miserable when he had lost all that God had given him?' and gives this answer, 'No, he had still that

taining twelve loaded revolvers, stands by the side of his bed. Might we not inscribe over it, "Diamonds are my portion; therefore do I fear?"[c]

26—30. (26) good, "the repetition of the word at the beginning of this and the connected verses heightens the effect." quietly wait, or wait in silence;[a] abstaining from all complaining. salvation, including all God's gracious ways of helping. (27) yoke, symbol of suffering: Divine disciplinary dealings. youth, early in life, when all lessons are more easily learned. (28) keep silence, *comp.* "quietly wait," of *v.* 27. (29) mouth . . dust, the attitude of deep humiliation.[b] (30) cheek, *etc.*, Is. i. 6; Mat. v. 39.

The good of early obedience (*v.* 27).—There is a threefold yoke which it is good for a man to bear in his youth. I. The yoke of affliction. 1. Good for all kinds of men; 2. Enlightening; 3. Preparatory to grace and conversion; 4. Strengthens spiritual convictions: 5. Stirs up the heart to prayer; 6. Teaches the emptiness of the creature. II. The yoke of conviction of sin. 1. The sooner it is borne the easier it is borne; 2. Those who are subjects of early convictions grow rich in grace. III. The yoke of subjection and obedience to Christ. 1. He has his yoke; 2. It is the concern of every one to take his yoke in youth, because of the call of God, the claims of Christ, the invitation of the Spirit; sin gets advantage by continuance; the earlier the easier; it has the kindest acceptance with God; it is the fittest season for religion: the danger of delay.[c]

Herbert Palmer.—The Rev. Herbert Palmer, B.D., Master of Queen's College, Cambridge, who died in 1647, and who was "a burning and a shining light" in his day, was remarkable for his dutiful affection to his parents, not only when he was a child, but during his whole life. He was peculiarly attentive to his pious, aged mother: promoting to the utmost of his power both her temporal and spiritual comfort, even to the day of her death, which happened not long before his own. He used frequently to enforce this duty in his ministry, observing the emphasis which God puts upon it through the whole of the Scriptures. He used to say that he had noticed the effects of disobedience to parents so that he scarcely ever knew undutiful children escape some visible judgment of God in the present life: he also thought that the mischiefs which occur in society frequently take their rise in the contempt of parental authority.[d]

31—36. (31) cast off, He puts away in *chastisement*, but not in *forsaking*. Divine punishments are only temporary. (32) cause grief, by His judgments. (33) willingly, *lit.* "from his heart."[a] (34) crush, *etc.*, prob. referring to the excess of cruelty with which the Chaldæans had executed the Divine commission. (35) turn . . right, so as to procure an unjust judgment. most High, here only a superior, a judge. (36) approveth not, or seeth not with approval.[b]

Comfort for the sorrowful (*vv.* 31—36).—We have—I. A cheering assurance given—1. That God's abandonment of His people is only temporary; 2. That the favour with which He will visit them will be signal and abundant. II. An important reason adduced. This may be inferred—1. From His character; 2. The relation in which He sustains to His people; 3. Their sufferings are

God who gave him all."—*Bridge.*

c Rec. R. Gray.

a Ps. xxxvii. 7.

b Ps. cxix. 25.

v. 26. *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 217; *Dr. A. Rees*, iii. 369; *H. Melvill*, i. 281.

v. 27. *Dr. A. Snape*, ii. 223; *Syd. Smith*, i. 364; *Bp. Wordsworth*, 62; *R. Southgate*, ii. 77; *H. Scougall*, 119.

c Matthew Mead.

The teacher is like the switchman, who holds the key to the switches on the railroad. If he does his duty faithfully, the train will reach its destination safely: if he neglects it, disaster and ruin follow. A misplaced switch or a wrong signal may send hundreds into eternity unprepared.

d R. T. S.

a Nu. xvi. 28; He. xii. 10.

b "As God takes no pleasure in oppressing the poor and helpless, so neither will He suffer any men to go unpunished that are guilty of such acts of injustice and cruelty, who never think that all the wrongs they do are committed in the

attended with many alleviations; 4. The object He has in view in their afflictions: 5. His readiness to remove His chastening hand. III. A gracious limitation subjoined whenever He afflicts. It is—1. Within the bounds of moderation; 2. Never in violation of the principles of equity.

Divine chastisements.—This is the manner of God's proceedings—to send good after evil, as He made light after darkness; to turn justice into mercy, as He turned water into wine. For as the beasts must be killed before they could be sacrificed, so men must be killed before they can be sacrificed; that is, the knife of correction must prune and dress them, before they can bring forth fruit. These are the cords which bind the ram unto the altar, lest when he is brought thither he should run from thence again; this is the chariot which carrieth our thoughts to heaven. This is the hammer which squareth the rough stones, till they be plain and smooth, and fit for the temple.[e]

37—41. (37) who .. not, Ps. xxxiii. 9. (38) evil and good, Am. iii. 6. (39) living, the word is emphatic in the sentence. "As long as God spares a man's life, why does he murmur? The chastisement is really for his good; only let him use it aright, and he will be thankful for it in the end."[a] (40) try our ways, our conduct, for in them we shall find the reason of our chastisement. turn again, or return.[b] (41) heart .. hands, the hands in the attitude of prayer: the heart with them, making the prayer both sincere and earnest.[c]

Living men ought not to complain (*v.* 39).—I. State the most common causes of complaint. 1. Our circumstances in the world; 2. The sufferings to which we are doomed; 3. Our condition as moral agents. II. Show the impropriety of such conduct. 1. It is unreasonable; 2. Useless; 3. Impious and profane; 4. Endangers his immortal interests. III. Point out its most effectual remedy. 1. Seek the regeneration of our natures; 2. Consider what pain and punishment we deserve: 3. Think of the sufferings of others; 4. Remember the design of God in afflicting us; 5. Pray that our day of strength may be as our day.[d]

The believer's portion.—'Tis a part and portion which can never be spent. You may live upon God: there is enough in Him for millions and millions and millions. God is better than heaven, better than grace, better than glory, better than things present, or things to come. The promises are like a rich ring of gold,—but this is the rare diamond in that ring; it is the crown, the top, excellency of all promises. His wisdom is the soul's for direction, His power for protection, His grace for its acceptation, His Spirit for its consolation, His creatures on earth to serve us, His angels to guard us, His ordinances to feed and strengthen us, His grace to adorn us, His riches to advance and crown us to eternity.[e]

42—45. (42) not pardoned, or overlooked our iniquity, but rather, has visited it upon us. (43) covered .. anger, *i.e.* covered Thy face in anger. persecuted us, better, *pursued us.* (44) covered .. cloud, to hide Thy face from the observation of our distresses.[a] (45) offscouring, 1 Cor. iv. 13.

Importunate prayer.—To present a petition is one thing; to prosecute a suit is another. Most prayers answer to the former. But successful prayer corresponds to the latter. The children of

sight of the supreme Judge of the world."—*Lowth.*

v. 33. *J. Fawcett*, i. 63; *Dr. Hunter*, ii. 272; *T. Blackley*, iii. 179.

"His sad complexion wears grief's mourning livery — he is clothed in tears."—*John Day.*

c Henry Smith, 1570.

a Spk. Com.

b "The prep. in the Heb. is very forcible, implying, 'Let us go back, not halfway but the whole.'"—*Nägelsbach.*

c "The action of confession was not to be the mere outward extension of the hands towards God. Such outward expression, to be sincere, was to be accompanied with the inward feelings of the heart."—*Henderson.*

d Beta in 400 Sks.

e Benjamin Keach, 1650.

a Our sins become the hiding cloud.

"I have seen a father hold out at a distance from the child, a promised good. The child, as soon as he saw it, stretched out his hands to take it, but found that it

this world are in this respect wise in their generation. When they have a petition to carry, they go with it to the seat of government, and having conveyed it by the proper channel to the power which is to decide upon it, they anxiously await the decision, in the meantime securing all the influence they can, and doing everything possible to ensure a favourable result. So should the children of light do. But frequently they just lodge their petition in the court of heaven, and there they let it lie. They do not press the suit. They do not employ other means in furthering it, beyond the simple presenting of it. They do not await the decision of it. The whole of prayer does not consist in taking hold of God. The main matter is holding on. How many are induced by the slightest appearance of repulse to let go, as Jacob did not! I have been struck with the manner in which petitions are usually concluded: "And your petitioners will ever pray." So "men ought always to pray (to God) and never faint." Payson says, "The promise of God is not to the act, but to the habit of prayer."[b]

46—50. (46) opened their mouths, ch. ii. 16. (47) fear, *etc.*, Is. xxiv. 17; Je. xlviii. 43. (48) mine eye, *etc.*, Je. iv. 19. (49) without . . intermission, or because there is no intermission of my miseries. (50) till the Lord, intimating that in his seeming hopelessness he yet held fast his hope in God.

Tears of God's people.—They are the tears which burst from our hearts when we look upon Him whom we have pierced, and weep as a mother that weepeth for an only son; the tears which Christ wept over Jerusalem, fallen and impenitent, foreseeing its relentless doom; the tears of compassion which He wept over the sorrows of the house of Lazarus; the tears which Paul shed when in the city of Ephesus he went, by night and by day, from house to house, entreating the people to be reconciled unto God. Not the bitter and disappointed mood of Jonah when he was exceedingly displeased and very angry because the Lord had relented of His threatenings against Nineveh, and entreated God, saying, "Take, I beseech Thee, my life away from me, for it is better for me to die than to live:" but the mood of Jeremiah the Prophet, when He exclaimed, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the daughters of my people!" Not the tears of pride, which come reluctant from the steeled head, like water dropping from the flinty rock, but the tears of pride humbled and convinced by the power of God, which flow copiously like the stream which issued from the rock, when it had been smitten by the wand of Moses, the messenger of God. Not the tears of natural desire after a worldly good, nor the tears of natural sorrow for a worldly good removed, but the tears of spiritual desire after spiritual good, or the tears of sorrow when God hath hidden His countenance or removed our candlestick out of its former place.[a]

51—54. (51) affecteth . . heart, or maketh my soul ache. because of, or "more than all." daughters, *Ewald* refers to the daughter, or dependent towns around. *Calvin* thinks that Jer. exceeded even the softness of women in his abundant weep-

was too far away for him to reach. He then came nearer, and stretched forth his hands with greater effort. Still the object was too far for his grasp. Again the child came nearer and made another mighty effort. The father seeing the child so much in earnest to seize the object, drew his hand towards the child, and smilingly allowed him to seize the promised blessing."—*John Bate.*

b Nevins.

vv. 49, 50. *T. Boston*, iv. 60.

"Hide not thy tears; weep boldly, and be proud to give the flowing virtue manly way: 'tis nature's mark to know an honest heart by. Shame on those breasts of stone that cannot melt in soft adoption of another's sorrow."—*Aaron Hill.*

"Remembrance is the only paradise out of which we cannot be driven away. Indeed, our first parents were not to be deprived of it."—*Richter.*

a E. Irving.

"Suffering is sweet when honour doth adorn it. Who slights revenge? not he

that fears, but scorns it." — *Buckingham.*

a C. Simeon, M.A.

"For sorrow is the messenger between the poet and men's bosoms. Genius can fill with unsympathising gods the scene, but grief alone can teach us what is man."— *Bulwer Lytton.*

b Cheever.

He who lays out most for Christ, provides best for himself. He who serves not himself, but Christ, is most truly free. He who belongs not to himself, but to Christ, possesses all things.

a Gesenius.

v. 57. *W. Fenner, i.* 265.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost;" "The Spirit maketh intercession within you," is the language of Scripture. As a wind musical instrument in the hands of the musician, so should Christians in prayer be in the hands of the Divine Spirit; they should present such prayers as He indites within them. The harmony, melody, sweetness, power, and effect of their prayers should be produced by the agency of the Spirit dwelling in them.

b Dr. Edmond.

ing. (52) like a bird, as hunters do a bird: tiring it down with prolonged pursuit. (53) dungeon, Je. xxxvii. 16. stone, usually put at the mouth of a dungeon to secure the prisoner. (54) waters . . head, a figurative expression of his great trouble. Comp. Ps. lxix. 2. cut off, Ps. lxxxviii. 5; Is. liii. 8. I am as good as dead.

The efficacy of prayer (*vv.* 54–57).—I. To what a state God's most favoured saints may be reduced. In the Prophet's experience, however, we see—II. What remedy is open to them. The answer he received will lead us to contemplate—III. The efficacy of that remedy whenever applied.[a]

Fothergill's generosity.—A worthy clergyman, a friend of Dr. Fothergill, was, in the early part of his life, settled in London upon a curacy of £50 per annum. An epidemical disease seized upon his wife and five of his children. In this state of distress he earnestly desired the doctor's advice, but dared not apply for it, from a consciousness of being unable to reward him for his attendance. A friend kindly offered to accompany him to the doctor's, and give him his fee. They took advantage of his hour of audience; and, after a description of the several cases, the fee was offered and rejected, but a note was taken of his place of residence. The doctor assiduously called from day to day, till his attendance was no longer necessary. The curate, anxious to return some grateful mark of the sense he entertained of his services, strained every nerve to accomplish it; but his astonishment was great when the doctor, instead of receiving the money he offered, put ten guineas into his hand, desiring him to apply to him without hesitation in future difficulties.[b]

55–59. (55) low dungeon, or very deep pit.[a] (56) breathing, poss. intended to indicate how exhausted and feeble his prayer was. (57) thou drewest near, in past time of trouble. (58) hast pleaded, as my *Goël* or *avenger*. (59) judge . . cause, at this present time also.

Watching unto prayer.—When an archer shoots his arrow at a mark, he likes to go and see whether he has hit it, or how near he has come to it. When you have written and sent off a letter to a friend, you expect some day that the postman will be knocking at the door with an answer. When a child asks his father for something he looks in his face, even before he speaks, to see if he is pleased, and read acceptance in his eyes. But it is to be greatly feared that many people feel when their prayers are over as if they had quite done with them. Their only concern was to get them said. An old heathen poet speaks of Jupiter throwing certain prayers to the winds—dispersing them "in empty air." It is sad to think that we so often do that for ourselves. What would you think of a man who had written, and folded, and sealed, and addressed a letter, flinging it out into the street, and thinking no more about it? Sailors in foundering ships sometimes commit notes in sealed bottles to the waves, for the chance of their being some day washed on some shore. Sir John Franklin's companions among the snows, and Captain Allen Gardiner, dying of hunger in his cave, wrote words they could not be sure any one would ever read. But we do not need to think of our prayers as random messages. We should, therefore, look for reply to them, and watch to get it.[b]

60—63. (60, 61) imaginations, or devices.[a] The word carries the idea of plans formed by men in mere wilfulness. (62) the lips,[b] or the talk; the foolish and malicious speeches. (63) music,[c] the subject of their merriment and their song.

Treating reproaches.—Pericles, as he was sitting before others in a meeting, a foul-mouthed fellow railed upon him all the day long; at night, when it was dark, and the meeting broke up, the fellow followed him and railed at him, even to his door, and he took no notice of what he said; but when he came home, this is all he said to him, "It is dark, I pray let my man light you home."[d]

64—66. (64) render, *etc.*, comp. Ps. lxix. 22—28: the words are taken fr. Ps. xxviii. 4. (65) sorrow of heart, or judicial blindness.[a] (66) destroy, *etc.*, comp. Je. x. 11. heavens . . Lord, Ps. viii. 3,[b] cxv. 16.

Unceasing prayer.—In this precept—to pray always—there is nothing of exaggeration, nothing commanded which may not be fulfilled, when we understand of prayer as the continual desire of the soul after God; having, indeed, its times of intensity, seasons of an intenser concentration of the spiritual life, but not being confined to those times; since the whole life of the faithful should be, in Origen's beautiful words, one great connected prayer; or, as St. Basil expresses it, prayer should be the salt, which is to salt everything besides. "That soul," says Donne, "that is accustomed to direct herself to God upon every occasion: that, as a flower at sunrising, conceives a sense of God in every beam of His, and spreads and dilates itself towards Him, in a thankfulness, in every small blessing that He sheds upon her—that soul who, whatsoever string be stricken in her, bass or treble, her high or her low estate, is ever turned toward God;—that soul prays sometimes when it does not know that it prays."[c]

a Je. xi. 19, xviii. 18.

b Ps. xxii. 7.

c Ps. lxix. 2.

d *Jeremiah Burroughs.*

a "Lit. a 'covering of heart,' *i.e.* a mental disease, obstinacy, hardness, the worst calamity that can befall a human being."—*Henderson.*

b "They shall be not only excluded from the happiness of the invisible heavens, but cut off from the comfort even of these visible ones, wh. are the heavens of the Lord, and wh. those therefore are unworthy to be taken under the protection of who rebel against Him."—*Mat. Henry.*

c *Archbp. Trench.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—4. (1) gold . . dim, *gold* is used metaphorically for the illustrious portion of the Jewish people.[a] *Calvin* refers it to the splendid adornment of the temple. stones . . sanctuary, metaphorical, referring to the priests and Levites. The fig. may be taken from the gems of the high priest's breastplate;[b] or from the stones of which the temple was built. top . . street, ch. ii. 19. (2) earthen pitchers,[c] Je. xix. 10, 11. (3) sea monsters, *tannin*, Dr. Pocock renders *jackals;* others render *whales*, these creatures being *mammalia.* young ones, lit. *whelps.*[d] ostriches, Job xxxix. 13—17. (4) cleaveth . . thirst, bec. the mothers, in the famine time, have no milk.

The world's estimation of the righteous (*v.* 2).—I. The characters described. 1. Zion is their spiritual birth-place, they acknowledge their great and growing obligations to Zion; 2. They are devoted to the interests of Zion. II. The excellence of the sons of Zion. 1. In respect of its purity; 2. Its utility; 3. Its value; 4. Its honour. III. The estimation in which the sons of Zion are too often held. 1. Their principles and misnames; 2. Their motives are suspected; 3. Their conduct is misrepresented.[e]

The potter and the clay—Impressibility of children.—It was my privilege, not long since, to visit an extensive manufactory

a *Grotius, Henderson, etc.*

b *Michaelis.*

c "With solid gold is contrasted the hollow pitcher, easily broken, and made of materials of no intrinsic value, but deriving its worth from mere human labour."—*Spk. Com.*

d As this term is only applied to the young of dog-like creatures, its use favours the translation, *jackals.*

e *Zeta* in 400 Sks. Dr. Shaw also says that, during the lonesome part of the night, the ostriches

often made a doleful and hideous noise, which would sometimes be like the roaring of a lion; at other times it would bear resemblance to the hoarser voices of other quadrupeds, particularly of the bull and the ox. I have often heard them groan, as if they were in the greatest agonies,—an action beautifully alluded to by the Prophet Micah (i. 8), when it is said, 'I will make a... mourning as the owls,' or rather, ostriches.
f W. H. Groser.

of the finest kind of porcelain, in one of our midland cities. I was first shown the crude materials; I saw them kneaded together in great circular cisterns as if by an unseen power, and then passed into the room where the potters pursued their craft. I watched "the potter work a work upon the wheels;" and as the white, moist clay, grew beneath his skilful hand into forms of grace and beauty. I thought I had never yet seen so exquisite a type of perfect plasticity. I could now appreciate the cogent question of the Apostle, "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" I had visited the city simply as a Sunday-school teacher, and here was indeed a striking emblem of my work. Each child, I thought, that God places beneath my care, has a nature plastic and impressible as yonder clay, and, whether I will it or not, will bear the impress of my moulding hand, whether skilful or unsteady, whether put forth in earnest wisdom or in vague uncertainty. Yonder vessels have different purposes to serve,—some to honour, and some to dishonour, according as the potter shall determine; but this for a few years, or at most a few centuries. And the vessels which I am called to fashion, they too have their destinies; but their honour or their dishonour shall be unchanging and eternal. God grant that, like some of these material things, they may at length be deemed fit for a royal Master's use!*f*

5—8. (5) **delicately**, or daintily. "Faring sumptuously every day." **desolate**, *i.e.* there are none to wait on them, or provide for them. Such persons are the most helpless in famine times. **in scarlet**, prob. referring to the luxurious scarlet couches of the grand houses. **dunghills**, are content to lie on the dunghills to secure a little warmth.[a] (6) **is greater**,[b] bec. her knowledge and privilege were greater. **no hands**, *etc.*, *i.e.* no human hands were wearied in the work of destroying her. (7) **Nazarites**, or separated ones; see Nu. vi. **rubies**, or coral. (8) **visage**, *etc.*, these indicate the effects of prolonged famine.[c] **like a stick**, withered and dry.

Ostrich.—This remarkable bird lives in the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa, subsisting on the coarsest herbage and grain. When full-grown, the neck, particularly of the male, which before was almost naked, is now very beautifully covered with red feathers. The plumage, likewise, upon the shoulders, the back, and some parts of the wings, from being hitherto of a dark greyish colour, becomes now as black as jet, while the rest of the feathers retain an exquisite whiteness. The females form their nests in the sand, and cover their eggs, the same as the fowl or partridge. Several birds lay their eggs in the same nest, the males sitting on them at night, and the females doing so alternately in the day. As many as sixty eggs have been found in one nest, while several others were scattered around, which are said to have served as nourishment to the young ones when hatched, till capable of digesting harder food. The parent birds take little care of their young. Dr. Shaw says that on the least noise, or trivial occasion, she forsakes her eggs or her young ones, to which, perhaps, she never returns, or if she does, it may be too late. Though the ostrich will sometimes engage in fierce and angry combat, employing both its claws and bill, it nevertheless, when taken young, becomes as tame as the domestic fowl. The same author observes:—"I had several opportunities

a Comp. Job xxiv. 8.

b "Sodom was not given up into the hands of an enemy that laid siege to it, nor condemned to the lingering destruction of famine."—*Lowth.*

"Sodom's sufferings in dying were brief; there were no starving infants, no mothers cooking their offspring for food."—*Nägelsbach.*

c Job xxx. 30.

"In the morning, when you awake, accustom yourself to think first upon God, or something in order to His service; and at night also let Him close thine eyes, and let your sleep be necessary and healthful, not idle and expensive of time beyond the needs and conveniences of nature: and

of amusing myself with the action and behaviour of the ostrich. It is very diverting to observe with what dexterity and equipoise of body it would play and frisk about on all occasions. In the heat of the day, particularly, it would strut along the sunny side of the house with great majesty. It would be perpetually fanning and priding itself with its quivering, expanding wings, and at other times it would continue its fanning, vibratory movements. With their help, it will go faster than the fleetest horse, and with two black boys on its back." With all their speed, however, they do not run in a straight line, but wheel round in circles of a greater or less extent, so that the Arab huntsman is able, after a very difficult chase, to approach and slay them with their clubs, preferring that weapon, that an effusion of blood may not spoil the feathers. These are chiefly obtained from the wings, which in a bird of full plumage contain forty: the tail feathers seldom exceed nine inches in length, and are of so little value, that they are seldom exported from the Cape, as the birds, when killed, are generally found with their tails worn to the stumps from working in the sand.

9—12. (9) better, bec. at once put out of their misery. pine away, Heb. *flow out;* as if the famine struck them, and life slowly ebbed away.[a] (10) hands . . children, De. xxviii. 57; La. ii. 20. (11) accomplished, *etc.*, by this expression we are recalled to the fact that this Divine visitation had been threatened. (12) not . . believed, bec. the city seemed to be so well fortified.[b]

Cooking in the East (*v.* 5).—In preparing their victuals, the Orientals are, from the extreme scarcity of wood in many countries, reduced to use cow-dung for fuel. At Aleppo, the inhabitants use wood and charcoal in their rooms, but heat their baths with cow-dung, the parings of fruit, and other things of a similar kind, which they employ people to gather for that purpose. In Egypt, according to Pitts, the scarcity of wood is so great, that at Cairo they commonly heat their ovens with horse or cow dung, or dirt of the streets: what wood they have being brought from the shores of the Black Sea, and sold by weight. Chardin attests the same fact: "The Eastern people always use cow-dung for baking, boiling a pot, and dressing all kinds of victuals that are easily cooked, especially in countries that have but little wood:" and Dr. Russell remarks, in a note, that "the Arabs carefully collect the dung of the sheep and camel, as well as that of the cow; and that the dung, offal, and other matters used in the bagnios, after having been new gathered in the streets, are carried out of the city, and laid in great heaps to dry, where they become very offensive. They are intolerably disagreeable, while drying, in the town adjoining to the bagnios; and are so at all times when it rains, though they be stacked, pressed hard together, and thatched at top." These statements exhibit, in a very strong light, the extreme misery of the Jews, who escaped from the devouring sword of Nebuchadnezzar: "They that feed delicately, are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet, embrace dunghills." To embrace dunghills is a species of wretchedness perhaps unknown to us in the history of modern warfare; but it presents a dreadful and appalling image, when the circumstances to which it alludes are recollected. What can be imagined more distressing to those who lived delicately,

sometimes be curious to see the preparation wh. the sun makes when he is coming forth from his chambers of the east!"—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"But live content, which is the calmest life; but pain is perfect misery, the worst of evils; and, excessive, overturns all patience."—*Milton.*

a "Stricken through, or pierced through, is very expressive of the sharp pain occasioned by severe hunger."—*Henderson.*

b "Such was the natural strength of Jerusalem, and such the widespread belief that the God of the Jews was omnipotent, that the city was considered to be impregnable."—*Henderson.*

"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love."—*Washington Irving.*

"Thy tears are no reproach; tears oft look graceful on the manly cheek: the cruel cannot weep. Lo, friend-

than to wander without food in the streets? What more disgusting and terrible to those who had been clothed in rich and splendid garments than to be forced by the destruction of their palaces to seek shelter among stacks of dung, the filth and stench of which it is almost impossible to endure? The dunghill, it appears from Holy Writ, is one of the common retreats of the mendicant, which imparts an exquisite force and beauty to a passage in the song of Hannah: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." The change in the circumstances of that excellent woman she reckoned as great (and it was to her not less unexpected) as the elevation of a poor despised beggar from a nauseous and polluting dunghill, rendered tenfold more fœtid by the intense heat of an Oriental sun, to one of the highest and most splendid stations on earth.[c]

13—16. (13) for the sins, *etc.*, Je. v. 31, xxiii. 21.[a] shed . . just, Je. xxvi. 7—24.[b] (14) with blood, by coming into contact with the many slain in the streets. could not touch, for fear of defilement. (15) they cried, *i.e.* men generally, even the heathen, cried against these polluted fugitives, and would not let them settle amongst them. (16) anger, lit. *the face.* they respected, men generally in the countries sought as asylums by the outlawed priests and elders.

Effect of hunger.—I leave it to physicians and naturalists to determine, with minute exactness, what effect extreme hunger produces on the body, particularly as to colour. It is sufficient for me to remark, that the modern inhabitants of the East suppose it occasions an approach to blackness, as the ancient Jews also did. "Her Nazarites," says the Prophet, complaining of the dreadful want of food, just before Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, "her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire. Their visage is blacker than a coal: they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick." Lam. iv. 7, 8. The like is said, ch. v. 10: "Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine." The same representation of its effects still obtains in those countries. So Sir John Chardin tells, that the common people of Persia, to express the sufferings of Hossein, a grandson of their prophet Mohammed, and one of their most illustrious saints, who fled into the deserts before his victorious enemies, that pursued him ten days together, and at length overtook him, ready to die with heat, thirst, and fatigue, and slew him with a multitude of wounds, in memory of which they annually observe ten days with great solemnity; I say he tells us, that the common people then, to express what he suffered, "appear entirely naked, excepting the parts modesty requires to be covered, and blackened all over; while others are stained with blood; others run about the streets, beating two flint-stones against each other, their tongues hanging out of their mouths like people quite exhausted, and behaving like persons in despair, crying with all their might, Hossein, etc. Those that coloured themselves black, intended to represent the extremity of thirst and heat which Hossein had suffered, which was so great, they say, that he turned black, and his tongue

ship's eye gives thee the drop it would refuse itself."—*Thomson.*

"Tears of joy are the dew in which the Sun of Righteousness is mirrored."—*Richter.*

[c] *Paxton.*

[a] Eze. xxii. 26, 28; Zep. iii. 4.

[b] Comp. Mat. xxiii. 31, 37; Ac. vii. 52.

"Sooner mayest thou trust thy pocket to a pick-pocket than give loyal friendship to the man who boasts of eyes to which the heart never mounts in dew! Only when man weeps he should be alone; not because tears are weak, but they should be secret. Tears are akin to prayer—Pharisees parade prayers, impostors parade tears."—*Bulwer.*

"On each pallid cheek a single tear hung quivering like early dewdrops on the sickening lily."—*Hugh Kelly.*

"Shed a tear of pity on their woes, which, as it drops, some soft-eyed angel bears, transformed to pearl, and in her bosom wears."—*Sir W. Jones.*

swelled out of his mouth. Those that were covered with blood, intended to represent his being so terribly wounded, as that all his blood had issued from his veins before he died." Here we see thirst, want of food, and fatigue, are supposed to make a human body look black. They are now supposed to do so; as they were supposed anciently to have that effect.[c]

17—20. (17) watched .. nation, even the Egyptians.[a] (18) they .. steps, referring to the missiles of the besiegers, whose engines were now advanced close to the walls.[b] (19) pursued, any of the inhabitants who tried to escape.[c] (20) breath .. nostrils, Ge. ii. 7. anointed, the Jewish term for the king. taken .. pits, hunted like a wild beast.

Persecution.—One Palmer, of Reading, being condemned to die, in Queen Mary's time, was much persuaded to recant, and among other things a friend said to him, "Take pity on thy golden years and pleasant flowers of youth, before it be too late." His reply was as beautiful as it was conclusive. "Sir, I long for those springing flowers which shall never fade away." When he was in the midst of the flames he exhorted his companions to constancy, saying, "We shall not end our lives in the fire, but make a change for a better life; yea, for coals we shall receive pearls." Thus do we clearly see that, although "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," yet the prospect of a better and enduring substance enables us to meet all the trials and temptations of this present life with holy boldness and joy.

21, 22. (21) rejoice, this call to an enemy of God's people appears to be ironical. "Rejoice while thou mayest."[a] cup, of Divine judgment. (22) accomplished, carried through, and completed. discover thy sins, &c. the evil of sin is shown in God's judgments upon it.[b]

God's discovery of man's sins (*v.* 22).—I. It is a vast discovery. Think—1. Of the significance of each separate sin; 2. Of the number of each man's sins. II. It is a terrible discovery. III. It is an inevitable discovery. 1. Sometimes made here—Cain, Belshazzar, Judas, Felix; 2. Is certain to be made hereafter.[c]

c *Harmer.*

a Je. viii. 20, xxxvii. 4—10, xlvi. 17.

b "Towards the end of the siege the towers erected by the enemy would command the streets, and such spots would be avoided."—*Spk. Com.*

c Comp. Je. lii. 8, 9.

"Whose hearts are ready at humanity's soft call to drop the tear."—*W. Mason.*

a Comp. Ecc. xi. 9.

b "He will discover how great thine iniquities are, by the remarkable judgments wherewith He punisheth thee."—*Lowth.*

c *Dr. Thomas.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—5. (1) reproach, or national disgrace. (2) our inheritance, Ps. lxxix. 1.[a] aliens, foreigners. (3) fatherless .. widows, &c. the war destroyed so many of the *men*. (4) water for money, no sign of scarcity could be more forcible than this,—even water must be paid for.[b] wood, necessary for firing. (5) necks, whereon yokes were laid.[c]

Wood for fuel (*v.* 4).—That numbers of the Israelites had no wood growing on their own lands, for their burning, must be imagined from the openness of their country. It is certain, the Eastern villages now have oftentimes little or none on their premises: so Russell says, that inconsiderable as the stream that runs at Aleppo, and the gardens about it, may appear, they, however, contain almost the only trees that are to be met with for twenty or thirty miles round, "for the villages are destitute of trees," and most of them only supplied with what rainwater they can save in cisterns. D'Arvieux gives us to understand that

a Le. xx. 24.

b "Reference is most prob. to the sojourn in Babylon, where one of the hardships was the necessity for paying a tax on water, a tax for access to the rivers and fountains."—*Fausset.*

c De. xxviii. 48.

"Thy heart is big! Get thee apart and weep.

several of the present villages of the Holy Land are in the same situation: for, observing that the Arabs burn cow-dung in their encampments, he adds that all the villagers who live in places where there is a scarcity of wood take great care to provide themselves with sufficient quantities of this kind of fuel. This is a circumstance I have elsewhere taken notice of. The Holy Land appears, by the last observations, to have been as little wooded anciently as at present; nevertheless, the Israelites seem to have burnt wood very commonly, and without buying it too, from what the Prophet says, Lam. v. 4. Had they been wont to buy their fuel, they would not have complained of it as such a hardship. The true account of it seems to be this: The woods of the land of Israel being from very ancient times common, the people of the villages, which, like those about Aleppo, had no trees growing in them, supplied themselves with fuel out of these wooded places, of which there were many anciently, and several that still remain. This liberty of taking wood in common, the Jews suppose to have been a constitution of Joshua, of which they give us ten; the first, giving liberty to an Israelite to feed his flock in the woods of any tribe: the second, that it should be free to take wood in the fields anywhere. But though this was the ancient custom in Judæa, it was not so in the country into which they were carried captives; or if this text of Jeremiah respects those that continued in their own country for awhile under Gedaliah, as the ninth verse insinuates, it signifies that their conquerors possessed themselves of these woods, and would allow no fuel to be cut down without leave, and that leave was not to be obtained without money. It is certain that presently after the return from the captivity timber was not to be cut without leave, Neh. ii. 8.[d]

6—10. (6) given the hand, as a pledge of fidelity; submitted ourselves. with bread, *i.e.* to get mere food to keep us alive. (7) our . . not, Je. xxxi. 29; Eze. xviii. 2. (8) servants have ruled, Neh. v. 15. (9) sword . . wilderness, fig. for the perils from the Arabs. (10) black, ch. iv. 8.

Danger may be near when we least expect it.—The Rev. John Newton sometimes said he had received more damage at his own door than in all the countries he had been in abroad; for he had twice fallen down the steps at his own door, each time spraining a knee. So much injury he had never received abroad. Such a fact shows clearly the necessity of our always living as if exposed to danger, and thus committing ourselves to the Divine protection.—*Life full of dangers.*—I sometimes think that life is like the experience of a man that climbs Alpine glaciers. His life is perpetually threatened by deep crevices covered with snow, steep declivities, uneven ledges, and impending avalanches. He is met by dangers at every step; and when the ascent is accomplished, he can count twenty places where he might have been dashed in pieces for one where he was absolutely safe.[a]

11—15. (11, 12) hanged . . hand, prob. aft. their death, to expose them to public contumely.[a] (13) grind, the house hand-mill; the work of female slaves. under the wood, *i.e.* under the heavy burdens of wood which they were compelled to fetch and carry. (14) ceased . . gate, from attending as magistrates. (15) dance, the sign of cheerfulness.

Passion I see is catching; for mine eyes, seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine, begin to water." — *Shakespeare.*

"Unvalued here such tears may fall; but know, each tear will prove a precious pearl in heaven above." — *The Triumph of Time.*

"Ah! bitter chill it was; the owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold; the hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass, and silent was the flock in woolly fold."—*Keats.*

"The nunneries of silent nooks, the murmur'd longing of the wood."—*Lowell.*

d Harmer.

"Look upon any duty or grace, and you will find it lie between Scylla and Charybdis, two extremes alike dangerous. Faith, the great work of God, cuts its way between the mountain of presumption and the gulf of despair. Patience (a grace so necessary that we cannot be without it a day, except we would be all that while beside ourselves) keeps us that we fall neither into the sleepy apoplexy of a blockish stupidity, nor into a raging fit of discontent."—*Gurnall.*

a H. W. Beecher.

a "Comp. the boast of Sennacherib, who says

Hanging by the hand (*v.* 12).—No punishment is more common than this in the East, especially for slaves and refractory children. Thus, has a master an obstinate slave; has he committed some great offence with his hands: several men are called, who tie the offender's hands, and hoist him to the roof, till he beg for forgiveness. Schoolboys who are in the habit of playing truant are also thus punished. To tell a man you will hang him by the hands, is extremely provoking. See, then, the lamentable condition of the princes in Babylon; they were "hanged up by their hands" as common slaves.[b]

16—18. (16) crown, fig. for the glory of the nation. (17) this, our calamity rather than our sin. (18) foxes, or jackals, creatures that frequent desolated cities, and live among ruins.[a]

On a tear.—

Oh, that the chemist's magic art
Could crystallise this sacred treasure!
Long should it glitter near my heart,
A secret source of pensive pleasure.

The little brilliant, ere it fell,
Its lustre caught from Chloe's eye;
Then, trembling, left its coral cell—
The spring of sensibility!

Sweet drop of pure and pearly light,
In thee the rays of virtue shine
More calmly clear, more mildly bright,
Than any gem that gilds the mine.

Benign restorer of the soul!
Who ever fliest to bring relief,
When first we feel the rude control
Of love or pity, joy or grief.

The sage's and the poet's theme,
In every clime, in every age;
Thou charm'st in fancy's idle dream,
In reason's philosophic page.

That very law which moulds a tear,
And bids it trickle from its source,
That law preserves the earth a sphere,
And guides the planets in their course.[b]

19—22. (19) remainest, *etc.*, Ps. ix. 7.[a] (20) for ever, *comp.* the next sentence, *for so long time.* (21) turn us, Je. xxxi. 18. (22) thou hast, better, *for wilt Thou?* "Wouldst Thou utterly reject us?"

Genuine conversion (*v.* 21).—The text teaches that—1. It is a turning of the soul to the Lord, not to creeds, not to churches; 2. It is a turning of the soul to the Lord, by the Lord; no one can turn the human soul to God but Himself.[b]

Various tears.—

There is a tear that spots the cheek,
And speaks more than the tongue can speak,
In words without a name,
That tells of many a pang within,
Of many a foul and deadly sin—
It is the tear of shame.

of the people of Ekron, 'The chief priests and noblemen I put to death, on stakes all round the city I hung their bodies; the people of the city with their wives I gave to slavery." —*Spk. Com.*

b Roberts.

a "They were prob. first attracted thither by the bodies of the slain, of which they are particularly fond."—*Henderson.*

v. 16. "Has a man lost his property, his honour, his beauty, or his happiness, he says, 'My crown has fallen;' does a father or grandfather reprove his sons for bad conduct, he asks, 'Has my crown fallen?'" —*Roberts.*

"From these pearly eyes should there fall down more tears of penitence than the clouds drop to purchase a new spring, I could not be forgiven." —*Old Play, Mulcasses.*

b Samuel Rogers.

a Ps. xxix. 10, cii. 12, cxlv. 13.

b Dr. Thomas.

"Our only hope is in the eternity and unchangeableness of Thy nature; and that Thou still governest the world, and orderest all the events of it; whereby Thou art always able to help us, and art never forgetful of the promises which Thou hast made

to Thy people."—*Lowth.*

"The tear down childhood's cheek that flows, is like the dewdrop on the rose; when next the summer breeze comes by, and waves the bush, the flower is dry."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

A maniac, while listening to a thrilling recital, was moved to tears. Lifting her withered finger, she exclaimed, "Do you see that tear? It is the first tear that I have shed for seven years; and it will relieve my poor burning head. I have often wished that I could weep; but I could not."

"Of nature's tears I would not rob thee: they invigorate virtue, soften at once, and fortify the heart; but when they rise to speak this desperate language, they then grow tears of weakness."—*Thomson.*

[c] *Cawdor.*

There is a tear that through the soul
Causes compassion's tide to roll
  In full but placid flow,
That shows the holy maxim true
How man is born his guilt to rue—
  It is the tear of woe.

There is a tear whose mute appeals
Tell all the conscious bosom feels,
  With thrilling eloquence.
That wrings the sympathetic sigh
Where ne'er a drop had dimm'd the eye—
  The tear of penitence.

There is a tear that trickles still,
Announcing all the worst of ill,
  Too bitter for relief,
That when by some dire mis'ry curst,
Swells the stretch'd heart-strings till they burst—
  It is the tear of grief.

There is a tear that dims the eye,
When answer'd by the stifled sigh,
  That speaks of woe within,
Ploughing a channel down the face
As if were there its resting-place—
  It is the tear of sin.

There is a tear that fiercely starts,
And to the haughty eye imparts
  A glance, by guilt supplied,
That falls not o'er the moisten'd lid—
To flow by fierce disdain forbid—
  It is the tear of pride.

But there's a tear that gently flows,
And, like the dewdrop on the rose,
  Refreshes all things near—
In which the sky of purest blue
Reflects its own celestial hue—
  It is religion's tear.[c]

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL.

Introduction.

I. Author. EZEKIEL (*God will strengthen, or prevail*) the son of Buzi, was, like Jeremiah, a priest as well as a prophet; "but with the priestly character more largely developed, and also one step farther removed from the ancient Prophets, inasmuch as he is the first in whom the author and the writer entirely preponderates over the seer, the poet, and the statesman" (*Stanley*). Carried captive with Jehoiakim by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 599, eleven years before the destr. of Jerus. **II. Time,** B.C. 595—574. **Place.** All his prophecies were delivered in Chaldæa, on the river Chebar (Khabûr), which falls into the Euphrates at Carchemish, about 200 miles north of Babylon. Here he resided (i. 1, viii. 1), and here his wife died (xxiv. 18). Tradition says that he was put to death by one of his fellow exiles, a leader among them whose idolatries he had rebuked: and in the middle ages what was called his tomb was shown, not far from Bagdad. **III. Characteristics.** His writings show remarkable vigour, and he was evidently well fitted to oppose "the people of stubborn front and hard heart" to whom he was sent. His characteristic, however, was the subordination of his whole life to his work. He ever thinks and feels as the prophet. In this respect his writings contrast remarkably with those of his contemporary, Jeremiah, whose personal history and feelings are frequently recorded. **IV. Canonicity.** Until recently the prophecies of Ezekiel have always been acknowledged as canonical, nor was it ever disputed that he was their author. The Jews, indeed, say that the Sanhedrim deliberated for a long time whether his book should form part of the sacred canon. They objected to the great obscurity at the beginning and end of his prophecy, and to what he says in xviii. 20, which, they urged, was contrary to Moses (Exod. xx. 5). But it is worthy of remark that Moses himself says the same thing as Ezekiel (Deut. xxiv. 16) (*Calmet*). **V. General subject.** The central point of his predictions is the destruction of Jerusalem. They were delivered partly *before* and partly *after* that event. *Before* that event his chief object was to call to repentance those living in careless security, and to assure them that the destruction of their city and temple was inevitably and fast approaching. *After* this event his principal care was to console the exiled Jews by promises of future deliverance and restoration to their own land, and to encourage them by assurances of future blessings (*Angus*).

Synopsis.

(*According to Hengstenberg.*)

The First Cycle ..... i.—vii.
The Second Cycle ..... viii.—xix.
The Third Cycle ..... xx.—xxiii.
The Fourth Cycle ..... xxiv.
Foreign Nations ..... xxv.—xxxii.
Words of Comfort ..... xxiii. 21—xxxix.
The Restoration ..... xl.—xlviii.

(*According to Litton.*)

I. Relating to the destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel's call (i.—iii.). Symbolical representations of siege and capture of Jerusalem (iv.—vii.). Vision of Jerusalem, exhibiting the idolatry of the people (viii.—xi.). Reproofs and warnings addressed to contemporaries (xii.—xix.). Another series, warning of the approaching calamity (xx.—xxiii.). Announcement of the commencement of the siege by the King of Babylon (xxiv.).

II. Relating to heathen nations (xxv.—xxxii.).

III. Relating to the restoration of the Jews (xxxiii.—xlviii.).

The Book is divided by Havernick into nine sections, and it seems probable that the arrangement was made by Ezekiel himself (*Angus*).

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) now it came, better, "*and* it came." A discourse in Hebrew is usually begun with the particle *vau* or *and*. thirtieth year, this was the age at which Levites were called to their office.[a] Ezekiel was a priest, *v.* 3. captives, or people of the captivity. Chebar,[b] the same as Chabor, 2 Ki. xvii. 6; 1 Chr. v. 26. visions of God, sublime, mysterious, majestic visions. (2) Jehoiachin's captivity, 2 Ki. xxiv. 12. (3) expressly, a "phrase marking strongly that it was in truth a heaven-sent vision." Ezekiel, Heb. *Jehezkel*. hand . . him, indicating that he felt sensible impressions of God's power resting upon him.[c]

The Divine government of the world (*v.* 1).—Note the subject, period, scene, and purpose of this vision. I. The subordinate agencies of the Divine government. 1. Here is the intelligent: 2. The non-intelligent. II. The leading features of the Divine government. 1. The idea of vastness; 2. Of complication; 3. Of intelligence; 4. Of progressiveness; 5. Of harmony. III. The wonderful Head of the Divine government.[d]

The river Chebar (*v.* 1).—"The Khabour flows through the richest pastures and meadows. Its banks were now covered with flowers of every hue, and its windings through the green plain were like the coils of a mighty serpent. An uncontrollable emotion of joy seized all our party when they saw the end of their journey before them. The horsemen urged their horses to full speed; the Jebours danced in a circle, raised their coloured kerchiefs on their spears, and shouted their war-cry; the Tizari sang their mountain songs and fired their muskets into the air. Trees in full leaf lined the water's edge. We rode through a mass of flowers, reaching high above the horses' knees, and such as I had never before seen, even in the most fertile parts of the Mesopotamian wilderness. We had passed several *tels* and the double banks of ancient canals, showing that we were still amidst the remains of ancient civilisation. Flocks of sheep and herds of camels were spread over the meadows on both sides of the river. On the morning after our arrival we crossed the Khabour on a small raft, and pitched our tents on its northern bank, near the ruins of Arban, which consist of a large artificial mound of irregular shape, washed by the river. From the top of the mound the eye ranged over a level country bright with flowers, and spotted with black tents, and innumerable flocks of sheep and camels. During our stay at Arban the colour of these great plains was undergoing a continual change. After being for some days of a golden yellow, a new family of flowers would spring up, and it would turn almost in a night to a bright scarlet, which would again as suddenly give way to the deepest blue. Then the meadows would be mottled with various hues, or would put on the emerald green of the most luxuriant of pastures. The glowing descriptions I had so frequently received from the Bedouins of the beauty and fertility of the banks of the Khabour were more than realised. The Arabs boast that its meadows bear three distinct crops of grass during the year, and the wandering tribes look upon its wooded banks and constant green

a Nu. iv. 23, 30.

These 30 years are variously reckoned. They seem to refer to the Prophet's own age. *Usher*, and other learned men, reckon them from the time when Josiah and all the people of Judah entered into the solemn covenant, 2 Ki. xxii. 3. From this time the 40 years of Judah's transgression may be reckoned: see Eze. iv. 6.

b "It flows into the Euphrates near Carchemish, or Circesium, 200 miles N. of Babylon."—*Fausset*.

c 1 Ki. xviii. 46.

v. 1. *A. Fuller*, 516; *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kgs.* 452.

d Dr. Thomas.

"While we view, amid the noontide walk, a limpid rill gush through the tickling herbage, to the thirst of summer yielding the delicious draught of cool refreshment; o'er the mossy brink shines not the surface clearer, and the waves with sweeter music murmur as they flow?"—*Akenside.*

"The river Rhine, it is well known, doth wash your city of Cologne; but tell me, nymphs, what powers divine shall henceforth wash the river Rhine?"—*Coleridge.*

sward as a paradise during the summer months, where man can enjoy a cool shade, and beast can find fresh and tender herbs, whilst all around is yellow, parched, and sapless."

4—9. (4) whirlwind,[a] one of the mightiest of Eastern destructive agencies. the north, wh. was felt by the Jews to be the peculiar seat of the power of Jehovah.[b] infolding itself, or lying in wreaths; moving round so as to form a circle of light. colour, or appearance; lit. *eye of.* amber, *comp.* the sunset colour just before the crimson flush.[c] (5) four .. creatures, *see* Re. iv. 6. of a man, *i.e.* they were erect. (6) four faces, *v.* 10. (7) straight feet, *i.e.* like a man's leg, without the middle joint which four-footed beasts have. sole .. feet, the foot proper was shaped as a calf's, indicating solid, firm treading. (8) hands .. wings, *i.e.* hands under each of the wings. (9) joined, *i.e.* in flying, one wing of one creature touched the wing of the next.[d]

The preparatory vision for true prophets (*v.* 4).—Note—I. What is local and temporary in this vision. 1. The peculiar sources of impression and instruction for the Prophet. II. The revelation of God's dealings with the Jews. Here we are taught —1. The Divine dealings would be marked by majesty of thought, by God's mode of manifesting Himself, by the agency of God's command. Note—II. What is universal and permanent in this vision. 1. That Divine providence possesses stupendous machinery; 2. That Divine providence has ever a moral aim in the use of its stupendous machinery; it teaches that all the mighty agencies of God are against evil, that with the Divine majesty of retribution there is also the majesty of mercy.[e]

A straight foot (*v.* 7).—Heb. "their feet was a straight foot." By foot here is meant the lower part of the legs, including the ankles. As the human foot is formed, motion of the body in any particular direction requires the foot to be turned in that direction. The form here mentioned precludes that necessity, which is doubtless the reason of its being assigned them.[f]—*Wings and faces* (*v.* 9).—The reader must imagine such a relative position of the living creatures, preserving the form of a square, that to the eye of a spectator the different faces would be presented as here described, for the Prophet could not see the four faces of each at once. Suppose two of the living creatures on a right line in front, and two on each side of the line, equidistant from it, and the faces can be easily arranged so as to conform to the description.[g]

10—14. (10) likeness, or the things wh. their faces resembled. The human face was the prominent one, the lion face was on the right side, the ox face on the left, and at the back the eagle face. This gives the four-square figure. (11) stretched upward, this was the attitude when the figure stood. joined, so as to fold over and shadow the faces. Comp. Is. vi. 2. (12) straight forward, bec. they never needed to turn themselves round, seeing that, whichever way they went, they had a face looking that way. spirit .. go, whichever way the inward impulse constrained them. "One spirit of one conscious life guided all the motions in perfect harmony." (13) appearance, was burnished and bright, like flame. (14) lightning, flashing suddenly to and fro.[a]

a Ps. lviii. 9; comp. Is. xxi. 1; Je. xxiii. 19, xxv. 32.

b Spk. Com.

c The word used may also be trans. "polished brass." *LXX.* and *Vulg.* render it by *electrum*, a compound of gold and silver.

d "Ezekiel was living in a country on the walls of whose temples and palaces were those strange mixed figures, human heads with the bodies of lions and the feet of calves, and the like, wh. we see in the Babylonian and Assyrian monuments. . . . The Prophet is not constructing his cherubim in imitation of these figures; the Spirit of God is revealing forms corresponding to the general rules of Eastern symbolism."—*Spk. Com. vv.* 4—14. *J. Sortain*, 292. *v.* 5. *J. Saurin*, vii. 262.

e U. R. Thomas.

f Bush.

g Ibid.

a "Incessant restless motion indicates the plenitude of life in these cherubim. Comp. Re. iv. 8." —*Fuusset.*

v. 12. *Dr. J. Fletcher*, iii. 391.

"One design of their having four faces was, that they might go directly forward towards either of

The nature of angels (*v.* 10).—1. Their origin ; 2. Their appearance ; 3. Their spirituality ; 4. Their purity ; 5. Their love ; 6. Their humility ; 7. Their sphere of action ; 8. Their fellowship ; 9. Their subjection ; 10. This vision of celestial glory exhibits to us the Son of man—the Son of God as covered with surpassing dignity, and as demonstrating, by His sovereign command of all the ministers of light, what power and authority He has to clothe whomsoever He pleases with whatsoever commissions, and to insist upon there being surrendered to Him all accounts of conduct that may be performed in any world.[b]

15—18. (15) **one wheel**, *i.e.* one wheel to each of the living creatures. It was set beneath their feet, and arranged to fit exactly the motion of the creatures. (16) **work**, or make, construction. **wheel . . wheel**, "each wheel was composed of two circles, cutting one another at right angles, one only of wh. appeared to touch the ground, according to the direction the cherubim desired to move in."[a] (17) **turned not**, *i.e.* they never returned, or went backward. (18) **rings**, or felloes, the circumferences of the wheels. **full of eyes**, symbolising the "plenitude of intelligent life."

The wheels.—From all that we can gather of the form of these wheels, they appear to have been spherical, or each composed of two of equal size, and inserted, the rim of the one into that of the other at right angles, and so consisting of four equal parts or half circles. They were accordingly adapted to run either forward or backward, to the right hand or the left, without any lateral turning ; and by this means their motion corresponded with that of the four faces of the living creatures to which they were attached. "When they went upon their four sides, they turned not as they went ;" Heb. "When they went, they went upon the quarter-part of their fourfoldness," *i.e.* upon, or in the direction of, one of the four vertical semicircles into which they were divided, and which looked towards the four points of the compass. When it is said, "they turned not," it is not to be understood that they had not a revolving or rotary motion, but that they, like the faces, never forsook a straightforward course.[b]

19—21. (19) **went by them**, or along with them. (20) **spirit . . go**, *v.* 12. (21) **in the wheels**, or in each wheel. "One and the same spirit actuated the living creatures throughout, wheels and all."[a]

Visions from God.—Visions from God, generally. It is true of them all that they are—1. Mental, hence most real, most impressive, memorable ; 2. Symbolic ; 3. Conjunctive : the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel begins with the word "and :" true visions are often products of what has preceded them, and causes that by impulse and command affect coming time ; 4. Predictive ; 5. Divine.[b]

Note on vv. 19, 20.—These circumstances are doubtless dwelt upon with peculiar emphasis, in order to show the intimacy of relation and harmony of action subsisting between the living creatures and the wheels, or more properly between the things symbolically represented by them.[c]

22—25. (22) **upon the heads**, above the heads. **colour . . crystal**,[a] a perfectly, oppressively clear sky, in wh. the Divine

the four cardinal points without turning their bodies."—*Bush.*

b G. B. Kidd.

a "As it were one wheel put across within another, like two circles in a sphere, cutting one another at right angles, to signify the stability and uniformity of their motions, and the subserviency of one part of providence to another."—*Lowth.*

v. 16. *W. Strong*, 657 ; *J. Wesley*, vii. 409.

"The holy power that clothes the senseless earth with woods, with fruits, with flowers, and verdant plains, whose bounteous hand feeds the whole brute creation, knows all our wants, and has enough to give us."—*Rowe.*

b Bush.

a "All four creatures together with their wheels are here called *the living creature*, because they formed a whole, one in motion, and one in will, for one spirit was in them."—*Spk. Com.*

b U. R. Thomas.

c Bush.

a "Such as dazzles the eye

with its lustre."—*Lowth.*

b Job xxxvii. 4, 5; Ps. xxix. 3, 4, 5; Re. x. 3.

c "From an Arab. root, meaning 'the impetuous rush of heavy rain.'"—*Faussel.*

d Vulg. renders, "When there was a voice they stood in an attentive posture."

e Bush.

v. 23. "The wings therefore of the whole four being in contact with each other, formed a kind of curtain beneath the incumbent pavement, and thus completed the resemblance to the temple bases, and forming in fact a magnificent living chariot."—*Ibid.*

f Ibid.

a Da. x. 5, 6; Re. i. 14, 15.

b "This vision being an evident representation of the Word that was to be made flesh, whose incarnation is the foundation of God's covenant of mercy with mankind, a rainbow, the symbol and token of mercy, was a very fit attendant upon that glorious vision."—*Lowth.*

c Dr. H. Bonar.

"There is a Divine truth in the opinion that these fourfold cherubim, or living creatures, represent the

glory appeared as upon the throne. (23) covered . . bodies, the upper wings folding over their heads, the lower ones shading their limbs. (24) noise, rustling. voice . . Almighty, *i.e.* like thunder.[b] voice of speech, or tumult: perhaps referring to the noise of *storm*.[c] (25) let . . wings, to take the attitude of waiting, listening for Divine commands.[d]

Note on v. 22.—Heb. "As for the likeness upon the heads of the living creatures, it was that of an expansion stretched over their heads above, like the aspect of the terrible crystal." This expansion was a splendid level pavement or flooring, of a crystal clearness, and resting upon the heads of the living creatures, as the temple layers rested upon the four cornerstays, or "undersetters," of their bases. The resemblance to the crystal was not in colour, but in transparency, for the colour was like that of a sapphire stone, or the cerulean azure of the real firmament of heaven. This is evident from *v.* 26, and also from Ex. xxiv. 9, 10, containing an evident allusion to this vision, and perhaps the germ of it. "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet, as it were, a paved work of a sapphire-stone, and, as it were, the body of heaven in its clearness."[e]—*V.* 24.—Heb. "And there was a voice—in their standing they let down their wings." The design of the Prophet seems to be, to show the perfect obsequiousness of the living creatures to the word of command emanating from the throne above, and directing their movements. When the word was given to move, their wings were at once expanded, the resounding din was heard, and the glorious vehicle, instinct with life, rolled on in amazing majesty. Again, when the counter mandate was heard, they in an instant stayed themselves in mid career, and relaxed their wings.[f]

26—28. (26) throne, *comp.* Ex. xxiv. 10. The throne appeared as if made of light, and resembling the colours and the brightness of sapphire. appearance of a man, surely as a foreshadowing of God's manifestation of Himself to us in the person of the *Man* Christ Jesus. (27) amber . . fire, these appear to be the symbols of Divine vengeance. "Our God is a consuming fire."[a] (28) of the bow, *i.e.* spanning the scene with one splendid arch.[b]

The glory and the love (*v.* 28).—Mark the several words of the text, each of them full of meaning. I. The Lord, Jehovah, the Triune God, the Messiah, is the manifestation or revelation of Godhead. II. The glory, Jehovah the Glorious One, to Him we ascribe the glory, that is, all infinite perfection and excellence. III. The likeness, word same as in Gen. i. 26, "Christ the perfect likeness of God," the express image of His person. IV. The appearance, the vision, visible form, otherwise we cannot see "the King eternal, immortal, invisible."[c]

Note on v. 27.—There is a studied indistinctness in the image here described, yet it is plain that a human form is intended to be shadowed forth, and that too in connection with the splendour of fire—a usual accompaniment of the visible manifestations of the Deity. There is little room to doubt, therefore, that in the august occupant of the throne we are to recognise the Son of God, the true God of Israel, anticipating, in this emblematic manner, His manifestation in the flesh, and His future exaltation

as King of Zion, riding forth in the chariot of the Gospel. Such was the vision presented to the view of the Prophet of the captivity. A more magnificent conception can scarcely be framed by the mind of man. Indeed, if we except the Apocalyptic disclosures of "the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," we know of nothing of this nature in the whole compass of revelation to be compared with it. Let the reader bring before his mind's eye the four living creatures of majestic size—so posited, and with their wings so expanded and in contact, as to form a hollow square—the whole four raised above the earth, and resting upon an equal number of spherical wheels compounded like the equator and meridian circles of the globe—their heads, with the quaternion of faces, made the supporters of a broad lucid pavement, clear as crystal, and having the hue of the ethereal vault—and this splendid firmament surmounted by the visible Divine Glory, controlling the movements of the living chariot—let him imagine this rolling throne moving onward with the noise of mighty thunderings, or of many waters, even "as the voice of the Almighty God when He speaketh," while fiery splendours and a bright rainbow surround the Majesty above, and the light of lamps, burning coals, and lightnings, glow amid the living creatures, and he cannot but feel that the ordinary creations of human genius, whether of poets or painters, present nothing worthy to be placed by the side of it.[d]

whole glorified society of believers, who show forth their faith in the Gospel, and live for ever in Christ."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 26. *F. D. Maurice, P.-Bk.* 177.

"The angels have had two great gala days; the first when creation was finished, the next when Christ was born. They are to have a third when He shall come again in the clouds of heaven." —*Seeds and Sheaves.*

d Bush.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—5. (1) **son of man,**[a] a term applied to Ezekiel 80 times: only applied otherwise to Daniel;[b] and our Lord. It may be used to put Ezekiel in mind of his frailty, though he was honoured with such sublime visions.[c] **stand,** in the attitude of one listening and ready to obey. (2) **set . . feet,** Da. x. 11. Comp. Eze. i. 28. (3) **nation,** Heb. *goyim*, the word applied to heathen nations, and used to intimate that the Jews had outdone the wickedness of the heathen. (4) **impudent,** Heb. *hard of face.* **stiffhearted,** unwilling to yield to counsel or chastisement. (5) **rebellious house,**[d] Is. xxx. 9.

Commission given to ministers (*v.* 4).—1. To declare God's will; 2. To assert His authority; 3. To seek, notwithstanding all our discouragements, the salvation of their souls. Learn hence—1. The importance of the ministry; 2. The duty of those who are ministered unto.[e]

Faithfulness to God and the king.—Bishop Latimer having one day preached before King Henry VIII. a sermon which displeased his majesty, he was ordered to preach again on the next Sabbath, and to make an apology for the offence he had given. After reading his text, the bishop thus began his sermon:—"Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest: therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease; but then consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence thou comest? upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God! who is all-present! and who beholdeth all thy

a Heb. *Ben Adam.*
b Da. viii. 17.
c 2 Cor. xii. 7.
d "Whether they will regard what is said by thee or not, yet the event answering thy predictions shall render thy authority unquestionable, and them inexcusable for not hearkening to the warnings thou hast given them."—*Lowth.*

e C. Sime on,

"They are impudent children, brazen-faced, and cannot blush; they are stiff-hearted, self-willed, and cannot bend, or not stoop, neither ashamed nor afraid to sin; they will not be wrought upon by the sense either of honour or

duty." — *Matthew Henry.*

vv. 4, 5. *D. G. Richards*, 283; *J. Randall*, 323. When Com. Smith received a telegram that *The Congress*, which was commanded by his son, had struck her flag, he remarked, "Then Joe is dead!" It was the father's eulogy over his dead son. He was indeed dead.

ways! and who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore, take care that thou deliverest thy message faithfully." He then proceeded with the same sermon he had preached the preceding Sabbath, but with considerably more energy. The sermon ended, the court were full of expectation to know what would be the fate of this honest and plain-dealing bishop. After dinner, the king called for Latimer, and, with a stern countenance, asked him how he dared to be so bold as to preach in such a manner. He, falling on his knees, replied, his duty to his God and his prince had enforced him thereto, and that he had merely discharged his duty and his conscience in what he had spoken. Upon which the king, rising from his seat, and taking the good man by the hand, embraced him, saying, "Blessed be God, I have so honest a servant."

6—10. (6) **not afraid,** Je. i. 8, 18. **briers**[a] . . **scorpions,** figures for those who might annoy, resist and persecute the Prophet. (7) **most rebellious,** or rebellion itself. (8) **eat . . thee,**[b] fig. for receive the message, commit it to memory.[c] (9) **sent,** or stretched forth. **roll,** ancient books were written on skins, rolled up, not folded. (10) **within and without,**[d] not as usually, on the one side only, but on both sides, because there was so much woe to record.

The scorpion.—To the northward of Mount Atlas, the scorpion is not very hurtful, for the sting being only attended with a slight fever, the application of a little Venice treacle quickly assuages the pain. But the scorpion of Getulia, and most other parts of the Sahara, as it is larger, and of a darker complexion, so its venom is proportionably malignant, and frequently attended with death. In Syria it does not seem to be deadly, but occasions much inconvenience and suffering to the inhabitants. Whole companies are suddenly affected with vomitings, which is supposed to be produced by the poisonous matter which exudes from the skin of the scorpion, as it crawls over their kitchen utensils or provisions. Nor is it possible almost to avoid the danger; it is never at rest during the summer months, and so malicious is its disposition, that it may be seen continually flourishing its tail, in which the sting is lodged, and striking at every object within its reach. So mischievous and hateful is this creature, that the sacred writers use it in a figurative sense for wicked, malicious, and crafty men. Such was the house of Israel to the Prophet Ezekiel: "Thou dwellest," said Jehovah to His servant, "among scorpions." No animal in the creation seems endued with a nature so irascible. When taken, they exert their utmost rage against the glass which contains them; will attempt to sting a stick, when put near them; will sting animals confined with them, without provocation; are the cruellest enemies to each other. Maupertuis put a hundred together in the same glass; instantly they vented their rage in mutual destruction, universal carnage! in a few days only fourteen remained, which had killed and devoured all the others. It is even asserted that when in extremity or despair, the scorpion will destroy itself: he stings himself on the back of the head, and instantly expires. Surely Moses with great propriety mentions scorpions among the dangers of the wilderness: and no situation can be conceived more hazardous than that of Ezekiel, who is said to dwell among scorpions; nor could a fitter contrast

a Comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 6; Sol. Song ii. 2; Is. ix. 18.

b Comp. Re. x. 9.

c "The idea is to possess himself fully of the message, and digest it in the mind: not literal *eating*, but such an appropriation of its unsavoury contents, that they should become, as it were, part of himself, so as to impart them the more vividly to his hearers." —*Fausset.*

d "So as to be completely filled, as the sealed roll in the Apocalypse. Re. v. 1."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 6. *R. Warner*, iii. 121.

v. 7. *W. Reading*, ii. 493.

"As angel guardians." — *Play*, "*Emilia.*" "Vows as faithful as a dying saint's."—*Centlivre.* "As the magnet."—*W. S. Walker.* "As the needle to its pole"—*Centlivre.* "As the polestar."—*Cumberland.* "As the silent mirror shows in its true bosom."—*J. G. Cooper.*

be selected by our Lord: "Will a father give a scorpion to his child instead of an egg?" Jesus invested His disciples with power to tread on serpents and scorpions; by which may be denoted power and authority to counteract and baffle every kind of agent which the devil employs to vex and injure the Church. The disciples of Antichrist, who, by their poisonous doctrines, injure or destroy the souls of men, are likewise compared to these dangerous animals: "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power."[e]

"As the turtle's mate."—*W. Hawkins.*

e Paxton.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—3. (1) **eat . . speak**, receive the truth thyself, then speak it to others. (2) **opened my mouth**, in the attitude of obedience. (3) **cause . . eat**, perhaps intimating that he should wait for a *full* impression of the message, and not act merely on a *first* impression of it. **mouth . . sweetness**,[a] any message given by God the good man feels to be precious, but he may afterwards be oppressed by finding it to be a message of woe.[b]

Effects of the Jewish captivity on the Greeks.—Selden considers that Pythagoras conversed with Ezekiel at Babylon. Townsend has given an interesting view of the effects of the dispersion of the Jews upon the progress of philosophy and literature in Greece. He notices the constant intercourse between Judæa and Egypt, and the frequent communication of the Greeks with the latter country, where the Grecian legislators and philosophers acquired their knowledge. Thus the Greeks must have become acquainted with the history and polity of the Jews. He remarks, that from the period of the captivity, when so many of the Jews were removed to Babylon and Egypt, the Greeks began to have more exalted ideas of the Deity. He shows that Thales, as well as Pythagoras, would thus converse with the Jewish captives; and that many of the opinions taught by the former, appear to have been learned from them; but observes that when compared with Christianity, moral philosophy is little less than the darkness it so partially illumined. With respect to Pythagoras, he seems to have conversed with Jews at Tyre, and at Mount Carmel. Also he visited Egypt, and was twelve years at Babylon, where he arrived about two years before the death of Belshazzar, and witnessed many of the events recorded in the book of Daniel, and had a teacher whom Selden considers to have been Ezekiel.[c]

a Re. x. 9.

b "The sweetness in the mouth denoted that it was good to be a messenger of the Lord, but the bitterness which accompanied it denoted that the commission brought with it much sorrow, for the tidings were sad and evil."—*Spk. Com.*

"I have seen angels by the sick one's pillow—theirs was the soft tone and the soundless tread; where smitten hearts were drooping like the willow, they stood between the living and the dead."—*Elizabeth Wetherall.*

c Visitor.

4—9. (4, 5) **strange speech**, *lit.* "deep of lip and heavy of tongue;" or a people speaking an obscure and unintelligible language. The idea is that even *they* would more readily listen to the Prophet than Israel would. (6) **many people**, or peoples; the heathen nations. (7) **not . . me**, speaking by providences and judgments. (8) **face strong**,[a] with prob. reference to Ezekiel's name, wh. means "One whom God makes strong." (9) **adamant**, Heb. *shamir*, a diamond.[b] Zec. vii. 12; Je. xvii. 1. **flint**, De. viii. 15. The diamond was employed to cut flint.[c]

Our native land.—

There is a land, of every land the pride,
Beloved by heaven o'er all the world beside;
Where brighter suns dispense serener light,

a "I have given thee courage and assurance proportionable to the hardiness and impudence of those thou hast to deal with."—*Lowth.*

b Formed from the Lat. *adamas*, it formed the point of the ancient pen, or stylus.

c "Ezekiel's firmness being that of a diamond, he

should cut a stroke home to the hardened hearts of a rebellious people."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 8, 9. *Dr. G. Croft*, ii. 59.

"Statesman, yet friend to truth; of soul sincere, in action faithful, and in honour clear! Who broke no promise, served no private end, who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend; ennobled by himself, by all approved, praised, wept, and honour'd by the muse he loved."—*Pope.*

d J. Montgomery.

And milder moons emparadise the night;
A land of beauty, virtue, valour, truth,
Time-tutor'd age, and love-exalted youth.
The wandering mariner, whose eye explores
The wealthiest isles, the most enchanting shores,
Views not a realm so bountiful and fair,
Nor breathes the spirit of a purer air;
In every clime the magnet of his soul,
Touch'd by remembrance, trembles to that pole!
For in this land of heaven's peculiar grace,
The heritage of nature's noblest race,
There is a spot of earth supremely blest—
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest,
Where man, creation's tyrant, casts aside
His sword and sceptre, pageantry and pride,
While in his soften'd looks benignly blend
The sire, the son, the husband, brother, friend.
Here woman reigns; the mother, daughter, wife,
Strews with fresh flowers the narrow way of life!
In the clear heaven of her delightful eye,
An angel-guard of loves and graces lie!
Around her knees domestic duties meet,
And fireside pleasures gambol at her feet.
Where shall that land, that spot of earth be found?
Art thou a man?—a patriot?—look around;
Oh thou shalt find, howe'er thy footsteps roam,
That land thy country, and that spot thy home![d]

10—14. (10) **receive . . heart**, explanation of the fig. of eating the roll, ch. ii. 8. (11) **of thy people**, God does not say, "of *My* people." "They have disfranchised themselves by their sins." (12) **took me up**, to carry me to the place where the message was to be delivered. **rushing**, caused by the passing away of the cherubic creature he had seen. **blessed . . place**,[e] *i.e.* the place where God had given the revelation of His glory. (13) **wings**, *etc.*, ch. i. 20. (14) **bitterness**, &c. of the character of the message. **hand . . strong**, I could not resist the Divine impulses.

"The idea seems to be that though God should forsake and destroy His temple, which is pre-eminently His place, yet His presence makes every place to be His temple, and He is attended there by multitudes of the heavenly host." — *Wordsworth.*

The widow's debt.—A minister of the Gospel, when preaching from the text, "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" said, "I knew a poor widow who had got into a little debt that was a burden upon her, which she could not remove, just as sin is a debt or burden upon the conscience, which no man is able to cast off. Well, what could the widow do? Her language to herself was, 'How can I live with this burden? My little furniture, my all, will be sold! I must go to the workhouse, where I must mix with bad people, who know not my Saviour, and who take His name in vain!' A benevolent individual, hearing of her distress, sent to the creditor, desiring him to bring a receipt in full, and he should have his money. He took the receipt, and gave it to the widow. 'Oh,' said she, 'now I shall live! I shall live!'" This little story the minister applied, in the most simple manner, to the atonement of Christ, and His payment of the debt of sin.

Comp. Is. vi. 3. A beggar asking Dr. Smollet for alms, he gave him, through mistake, a guinea. The poor fellow, on perceiving it, hobbled after him to return it; upon which, Smollet returned it to him, with another guinea as a reward for his honesty, exclaiming at the same time, "What a lodging has honesty taken up with!"

15—17. (15) **Tel-abib**,[a] on the river *Chebar* (ch. i. 3), the

[a] Hill of Abib,

chief seat of the Jewish exiles in Babylon. astonished,[b] or astounded; having my spirit utterly cast down and overwhelmed. seven days, the usual period for mourning, Job ii. 13.[c] (16, 17) a watchman, Is. lvi. 10; Je. vi. 17.[d] "One to look out from a city's walls, and see whether an enemy is coming, and give notice of his approach."

The watchman (*v.* 17).—I. His character and qualifications. 1. He must be a man of good repute; 2. He must produce proofs of past fidelity and good management; 3. He should have discernment, ingenuity, and courage; 4. He should be healthy and strong, able to bear exposure and fatigue; 5. He must be properly appointed; 6. He must have a proper dress and light. II. The watchman's duty. 1. One part is to tell the hour; 2. To protect the persons and property of the inhabitants from villains, accidents, and offences; 3. Go give alarm when danger is near; 4. To give account of the city to the magistrates.[e]—*Solitude not loneliness* (*v.* 17).—Why not talk with Him in the city? The point is that busy men may hear God in solitude, and solitary men may hear Him in the city. 1. The speciality of God's appointment; 2. The personality of God's communication; 3. The familiarity of God's condescension. Apply:—(1) God has ever something to say to man, as a ruler, as a father; (2) In seeking solitude, man should seek God: solitude without God leads to madness, with God to strength and peace; (3) Man himself should often propose to commune with God. Communion with God shows the capacity of our spiritual nature, the superiority of the material spiritual over the spiritual.[f]

18–21. (18) surely die, *i.e.* surely, unless you repent. This condition is assumed in all the Divine messages. speakest to warn, implying that the Prophet ought to do this again and again. die . . iniquity, unforgiven, and therefore to meet the eternal penalties. blood . . hand, counting you guilty of his death, in his sins, if you failed to warn him.[a] (19) delivered thy soul, from the burden of the man's death in sin. (20) lay a stumblingblock, or cause his iniquity to become his ruin. (21) sin not, and he manifestly ought not to sin if he be a righteous man.

Procrastination—A Pompeian priest.—Both in regard to the preservation of life, and the salvation of the soul, there is too often a strange indifference. The warning voice may arouse attention for a time, but the opportunity of escape is deferred, and destruction follows. A recent discovery at Pompeii has brought to light the fact of a priest fleeing from the temple, when the warning came of the city's approaching doom. But the treasures of the temple—why should he leave them? Ah! why? He is supposed to have returned to obtain them. Again he sets out, but had not proceeded far, before the destruction came, and he was lost. Had it not been for the treasures, his life might have been spared.—*The lost captain.*—A ship was on its way homeward, after a prosperous voyage, when a storm arose, and raged with such violence that the ship sprung a leak. After vainly striving to save the ship, it was resolved to abandon her. The boat was lowered, and all the crew, except the captain, got into her, though not without great difficulty, as the tempest was raging fiercely. The captain rushed down to the cabin to get his cash-box and some papers, although the crew earnestly

meaning either hill of corn (*Gesenius*), or hill of grass land (*Fuerst*), and so named on account of its fruitfulness.

b "Part. pass., first Eng., *stunian*; Ger. *erstaunen*; old Fr., *esmouner*, from *ex* and *tonnare*. The stunning of the faculties by fear or surprise conveys the ordinary idea of the word."—*Woolrych.*

c Ge. l. 10; 1 Sa. xxxi. 13.

d Hab. ii. 1.

v. 17. *Dr. E. Boys*, 107.

e *Benson Bailey.*

f *Dr. Parker.*

a "It shall be charged upon them in the day of account that it was owing to their unfaithfulness that such and such precious souls perished in sin; for who knows but if they had had fair warning given them they might have fled in time from the wrath to come?"—*Mat. Henry.*

"As we would judge a man a fool, who, having a great choice of strong horses, should let them go empty, and lay a great burden upon a poor beast that could scarce bear herself, no less unreasonable is he, who, passing over the vigorous days of youth and manhood, defers

reformation till feeble old age."—*Cawdray.*

a Spk. Com.

b "The silence of prophets is God's punishment of a people."—*S. Chrysostom.*

v. 22. *W. Jay*, iv. 303.

The memory of good actions is the starlight of the soul.

"Our memories, corrupted by the fall, are often like those ponds where frogs live and the fish die."—*Cripplegate Lectures.*

c J. J. Day, M.A.

entreated him not to do so, but to save himself while he could. During the moment he was gone, a violent gust of wind parted the rope which held the boat to the ship. When he returned with his money and papers, he stood anxiously by the side of the ship, but the boat was far away, and unable to return to him; and so he perished,—almost saved—altogether lost.

22—27. (22) plain, *lit.* "the cleaving that parts the mountain." (23) glory, *etc.*, ch. i. 28. "Now he is to learn that there is a time to be silent, as well as a time to speak, and that both are appointed by God."[a] (24) shut . . house, so as for a time to keep silence; and also in this way he was to learn how the people would shut their ears and hearts against His message. (25) bands, *etc.*, this must be treated morally, for we have no account of Ezekiel's having been imprisoned. (26) be dumb, no judgment can be greater than that wh. comes by the silencing of God's prophets and ministers.[b] (27) when I . . thee, then thou shalt be free to speak.

Remembering God's commandments (*v.* 27).—I. The duty of remembrance. 1. It is our duty; 2. The world is opposed to it; 3. But it is important in a worldly point of view. II. The benefit of this remembrance, since this life is designed to prove us, whether we will serve God or no. III. Do these things seem hard? note the comfort to be derived from this subject, "To do thee good at thy latter end." Apply—1. To Christians; 2. To others.[c]

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

a Fausset.

b "*Protrahere*, mediæval Latin, whence Fr. *protraire, portraire*, to cut or carve out; very appropriate of the ancient delineations carved in the solid rock."—*Woolrych.*

c "Those used by the Assyrians appear to have consisted of a strong framework on wheels, so covered as to protect the soldiers working it, and armed with one, sometimes two, pointed weapons. It differed considerably from the more familiarly known ram employed by the Romans."—*Ayre.*

"The tile was probably an undried one. Lord

1—4. (1) a tile, or brick. "Such are found in Babylon, covered with cuneiform inscriptions, often two feet long, one broad."[a] pourtray,[b] *i.e.* draw the picture of. (2) lay siege, *i.e.* represent the laying of a siege. fort, or watch-tower. mount, for the engines. battering rams, the engine used for thrusting down walls.[c] (3) iron pan, or plate: as a kind of shield. This was to be Ezekiel's defence as he conducted (in symbol) the siege of the city. (4) lie . . side, to represent the prostrate and bound condition of Jerusalem in the time of siege.

Catapult.—Calmet describes "an engine used for throwing very heavy stones, by means of a strong bow, whose circular arms are tightly held by two vertical beams, nearly upright; the cord of the bow is drawn back by means of a windlass, placed between two beams also, behind the former, but uniting with them at top; in the centre is an arm, capable of swinging backward and forward; round this arm the bowstring passes; at the bottom of this arm is placed the stone, in a kind of seat. The bowstring being drawn backward, by the power of the windlass drawing the moving arm, the rope is suddenly let go from this arm by a kind of cock, when the bowstring, recovering its natural situation, with all its power violently swings forward the moving arm, and with it the stone, thereby projecting the stone with great force and velocity. Another machine for throwing stones consists of two arms of a bow, which are strengthened by coils of rope, sinews, or hair (women's hair was reckoned the best for the purpose). These arms being drawn backward as tight as possible, by a

windlass placed at some distance behind the machine, the string of the bow is attached to a kind of cock, and the stone to be discharged being placed immediately before it, on touching the cock, the violent effort of the bow threw off the stone to a great distance." The arms of this bow were of iron; which was the same as the *balistæ* of the Romans. "Besides these kind of instruments that were extremely powerful, others of smaller size and inferior powers were constructed for the purpose of being carried about: these were somewhat like our ancient cross-bows; and the bowstring was drawn back by various contrivances, often merely by strength of arm, or by reducing the board that carried the arrow to its station backwards, by pressing it against the ground."[d]

Cornwallis got a good idea of Bangalore from a Brahmin, who acted as spy, and drew a plan of the place with great accuracy in a short time in moist clay."—*Caltaway.*

d Paxton.

5—8. (5) three .. ninety,[a] *see* Nu. xiv. 34. (6) forty days, with poss. reference to the extreme idolatries of the reign of Manasseh. (7) set thy face, *i.e.* direct thy mind. arm .. uncovered, so as to wield a weapon.[b] (8) bands, to keep you from moving; a symbol of the straitness of the siege.

Note on vv. 4—7.—It is more than probable something is alluded to here which we cannot understand. When a person is sick, he will not lie on his right side, because that would be a bad omen: should he in his agony, or when asleep, turn on that side, his attendants will immediately again place him on the left side. After people have taken their food, they generally sleep a little, but they are careful to repose on the left side, "because the food digests better." It is impossible to say what is the origin of this practice: it may have arisen from the circumstance that the right side "is of the masculine gender," and the left feminine, as is the case with the supreme Siva. Females are directed to recline on the right side, and many curious stories are told in reference to them, which are not worth repeating.[c]

a "Prob. dating from Jeroboam's first setting up the idolatrous worship of the golden calves, to the last captivity of the Jews, in the twenty-third year of Nebuc.'s reign."—*Lowth.*

b Is. lii. 10.

c Roberts.

9—12. (9) wheat, *etc.*, needful food for the time of his lying down. fitches, or *spelt*. (10) by weight, carefully doled out. shekels, Ge. xxiii. 15. (11) hin, Ex. xxix. 40. About a quarter of a pint. (12) bake .. man, indicating the lack of ordinary firing materials. The dried dung of cattle is constantly used for firing in the East.[a]

Millet.—This word (millet) occurs more than once in the sacred volume: Ezekiel calls it *duchan* or *dochan;* and Calmet thinks it is probably the *Holcus durra*, which forms a principal food among the Orientals. Its Latin name, millet, is supposed to be derived from *mille*, that is, a thousand grains, in allusion to its extraordinary fruitfulness. It requires a light sandy soil: is sown late, and gathered in about the middle of October; while the wheat and the barley are reaped by the end of May, just before the drought of a Syrian summer comes on. The worldly man is accustomed to regard such different management as the fruit of human observation and sagacity; but the inspired Prophet ascribes it with equal truth and energy to the suggestion of Divine wisdom and goodness: "For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." It is made into bread, with camel's milk, oil, butter, and other unctuous substances, and is almost the only food eaten by the common people of Arabia Felix. Niebuhr found it so disagreeable, that he would willingly have preferred plain barley bread. This is certainly the reason

a "To use human dung for such a purpose implies the most cruel necessity. It was in violation of the law. De. xiv. 3, xxiii. 12—14."—*Fausset.*

The Sultan whilst at Buckingham Palace had a lamb brought to the palace every morning, which was slaughtered there by his butener after a certain ceremony had been performed over it. Fowls were also killed in the same fashion. The Sultan always dined alone; there was a special dinner prepared for his son, who also dined alone, as did his two nephews. Several other separate

tables were laid for members of his Imperial Majesty's suite, according to their official dignity. The rule was broken through on the occasion of the luncheon with the Queen at Windsor Castle, and dining with the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House.
b Paxton.

that it was appointed to the Prophet Ezekiel as a part of his hard fare. But Rauwolf seems to have been of a different mind, or not so difficult to please: of this grain, says he, they bake very well-tasted bread and cakes, and some of them are rolled very thin, and laid together after the manner of a letter: they are about four inches broad, six long, and two thick, and of an ashen colour. The grain, however, is greatly inferior to wheat or barley, and by consequence must form a very inferior species of bread.[b]

13—17. (13) defiled bread, *i.e.* unclean according to Levitical rules. (14) polluted, by infringement of the laws concerning the clean and the unclean.[a] (15) cow's dung, which was commonly used: camel's dung makes the clearest fires. (16) break the staff, Le. xxvi. 26. (17) astonied, *comp.* ch. iii. 15.[b]

Fuel.—In consequence of the want of wood, camel's dung is used in the East for fuel. Shaw, in the preface to his *Travels*, where he gives a detailed description of the mode of travelling in the East, says that in consequence of the scarcity of wood, when they wanted to bake or boil anything, the camel's dung which had been left by a preceding caravan was their usual fuel, which, after having been exposed to the sun during three days, easily catches fire, and burns like charcoal. The following quotation from D'Arvieux serves still better to illustrate the text in which the Prophet is commanded to bake bread, or rather thin cakes of bread, upon cow-dung. "The second sort of bread is baked under ashes, or between two lumps of dried and lighted cow-dung. This produces a slow fire, by which the dough is baked by degrees; this bread is as thick as our cakes. The crumb is good if eaten the same day, but the crust is black and burnt, and has a smoky taste from the fire in which the bread is baked. A person must be accustomed to the mode of life of the Bedouins, and very hungry, who can have any relish for it." We will also add what Niebuhr says in his description of Arabia. "The Arabs of the desert make use of an iron plate to bake their bread-cakes: or they lay a round lump of dough in hot coals of wood or camel's dung, and cover them entirely with it, till the bread in their opinion is quite done, when they take the ashes from it, and eat it warm."[c]

a Comp. Ac. x. 14.

b "Look one upon another as persons under astonishment for the greatness of your calamities, and pining away or dying a lingering death through famine and other hardships."—*Lowth.*

"Ceremony was but devised at first to set a gloss on faint deeds, hollow welcomes, recanting goodness, sorrow ere 'tis shown; but where there is true friendship, there needs none." — *Shakespeare.*

c Rosenmüller.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—4. (1) knife, or sword. symbol of the destruction of the inhab. of Jerus. by the sword of the Chaldæans. barber's razor, or a sword to use like a barber uses his razor. balances, to signify the exactness of Divine justice. (2) burn, to indicate the destruction of this proportion of the inhab. by famine and pestilence. smite . . knife, as a symbol of this proportion killed by the sword. scatter . . wind, to represent the captivity of the last third. (3) few, to represent those left in the land, Je. xl. 5, 6. skirts, or wings. (4) cast . . fire, to signify the calamity of even the few that were spared for a time.[a]

The Scriptures a record of human sorrow.—The Bible, from the third of Genesis, is the history of a sorrowful race. This fact should teach us—I. That sorrow is mightily present in our world. Here is a book—1. The product of many lands

a Je. xlii. 18, xliv. 11—15.

"Look, who comes here; a grave unto a soul, holding the eternal spirit, against her will, in the vile prison of afflicted breath. — *Shakespeare.*

"Memory, the bane of the wicked, the home of the past, the

and ages, expressing their sorrows; 2. Intended for all lands and times. This reflection should—(1) Stir our thought; (2) Cultivate our soberness: (3) Quicken our sympathies. II. Sorrow is present in this world because of sin. The Scriptures, as the record of human sorrow, teach—1. That sorrow is here because of sin; 2. As the penalty of sin; 3. As one means of purification from sin.[b]

5—9. (5) **in the midst**, with the intention that she should hold forth My truth and claims before the nations. Notice the locally central position of Palestine: esp. as between Egypt, Phœnicia, and Assyria. (6) **change my judgments**, into calamities. God's judgments are *injunctions*, but disobeyed they become *woes*. (7) **multiplied**, better, "raged tumultuously," in your self-will and rebellion. (8) **execute judgments**, *comp.* the commands God gives with the judgments He executes. (9) **not done**, *comp.* Mat. xxiv. 21.[a]

Providence: the murderer and his singular wound.—A gentleman, who was very ill, sending for Dr. Lake, told him that he found he must die, and gave him the following account of his death. He had, about a fortnight before, been riding over Hounslow Heath, where several boys were playing at cricket. One of them, striking the ball, hit him just on the toe with it, looked him in the face, and ran away. His toe pained him extremely. As soon as he came to Brentford, he sent for a surgeon, who was for cutting it off. But unwilling to suffer that, he went on to London. When he arrived there, he immediately called another surgeon to examine it, who told him his foot must be cut off. But neither would he hear of this: and so, before the next day, the mortification seized his leg, and in a day or two more struck up into his body. Dr. Lake asked him whether he knew the boy that struck the ball. He answered, "About ten years ago, I was riding over Hounslow Heath, where an old man ran by my horse's side, begged me to relieve him, and said he was almost famished. I bade him begone. He kept up with me still, upon which I threatened to beat him. Finding that he took no notice of this, I drew my sword, and with one blow killed him. A boy about four years old, who was with him, screamed out his father was killed. His face I perfectly remember. That boy it was who struck the ball against me which is the cause of my death."[b]

10—13. (10) **eat . . thee**, Le. xxvi. 29; De. xxviii. 53; La. ii. 20, iv. 10. **remnant . . scatter**, fulfilled in the present condition of the remnant of the Jews; they are found in every land. (11) **defiled**, *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxvi. 14. **detestable things**, *i.e.* idols. (12) **third part**, as in the symbol, v. 2. (13) **fury to rest**, or cease, when its purpose of punishment is completed. **my zeal**, or just regard for My honour and authority.[a]

Human wrecks.—Can anything be more sad than the wreck of a man? We mourn over the destruction of many noble things that have existed in the world. Men, when they hear of the old Phidian Jupiter, that sat forty feet high, carved of ivory and gold, and that was so magnificent, so transcendent, that all the ancient world counted him unhappy that died without having seen this most memorable statue that ever existed in the world, often mourn to think that its exceeding value led to its destruc-

mind's magnetic telegraph."—*Family Friend*

b N. R. Thomas.

a La. iv. 6; Da. ix. 12; see also Zec. xiii. 8, 9, xiv. 2.

"As God connected Himself peculiarly with Israel, so there was to be a peculiar manifestation of God's wrath against sin in their case."—*Fairbairn.*

"All the routes—both by land and water—wh. connected the three parts of the ancient world passed through Palestine. The commerce bet. Asia on the one, and Europe and Africa on the other hand, had its centre in the great mercantile cities of Phœnicia and Philistra. Towards the S. the Arabah led to the Gulf of Elah, and the Shephelah to that of Hero. Opolis, while towards the E. the ordinary caravan road led to the neighbouring Euphrates, to the Persian Gulf, and thence to the important countries of Southern Asia. Even the highways wh. connected Asia and Africa touched Palestine."—*Biblical Things.*

b Cheever.

a "This is only a partial and imperfect mode of representing God's dealings with men."—*Spk. Com.*

"The completely human clothing of ideas in this passage is a sensible represents-

tion of the personality of God, in His being and in His actions."—*Schroeder.*

"O gentlemen, the time of life is short; to spend that shortness basely, were too long, if life did ride upon a dial's point, still ending at the arrival of an hour."—*Shakespeare.*

"He had learnt a most useful principle of life, which was, to lay nothing to heart which he could not help, and how great soever disappointments had fell out (if possible), to think of them no more, but to work on upon other affairs, and some, if not all, would be better natured."—*Sir Dudley North.*

b Beecher.

a Ex. xxiii. 29; De. xxxii. 24; 2 Ki. xvii. 25.

"When the cholera rages, no one will go out while the sun is at its zenith, because it is believed that the demon of the pestilence is then actively engaged. 'The hot exhalations of noonday are the chariots of the fiends.' The demons of darkness are said to have the most power at midnight."—*Roberts.*

b Busbequius.

c Burder.

tion, and that it perished. It was a great loss to art that such a thing should perish. Can any man look upon the Acropolis—shattered with balls, crumbled by the various influences of the elements, and utterly destroyed, and not mourn to think that such a stately temple, a temple so unparalleled in its exquisite symmetry and beauty, should be desolate and scattered? Can there be anything more melancholy than the destruction, not only of such temples as the Acropolis and the Parthenon, but of a whole city of temples and statues? More melancholy than the destruction of a statue, or a temple, or a city, or a nation, in its physical aspects, is the destruction of a man, the wreck of the understanding, the ruin of the moral feelings, the scattering all abroad of those elements of power that, united together, make man fitly the noblest creature that walks on the earth. Thousands and thousands of men make foreign pilgrimages to visit and mourn over fallen and destroyed cities of former grandeur and beauty; and yet, all round about every one of us, in every street, and in almost every neighbourhood, there are ruins more stupendous, more pitiful, and more heart-touching than that of any city. And how strange would be the wonder if, as men wandered in the Orient, there should come some one that should call from the mounds all the scattered ruins of Babylon, or build again Tadmor of the desert! How strange it would be to see a city, that at night was a waste heap, so restored that in the morning the light of the sun should flash from pinnacle, and tower, and wall, and roof! How marvellous would be that creative miracle! But more marvellous, ten thousand times, is that Divine touch by which a man, broken down and shattered, is raised up in his right mind, and made to sit, clothed, at the feet of Jesus.*b*

14—17. (14) waste, *etc.*, De. xxviii. 37. (15) instruction, they shall learn of God and His claims from such an example of judgment. (16) arrows, De. xxxii. 23. staff of bread, ch. iv. 16. (17) evil beasts, wh. soon multiply in a desolate and uninhabited country.*a*

Figurative use of the word "arrow."—The arrow, in this passage, means the pestilence. The Arabs thus denote it: "I desired to remove to a less contagious air. I received from Solyman, the emperor, this message: that the emperor wondered what I meant, in desiring to remove my habitation. Is not the pestilence God's arrow, which will always hit His mark. If God would visit me herewith, how could I avoid it? 'Is not the plague,' said he, 'in my own palace: and yet I do not think of removing.'"*b* We find the same opinion expressed in Smith's remarks on the Turks. "What," say they, "is not the plague the dart of Almighty God, and can we escape the blow He levels at us? Is not His hand steady to hit the persons He aims at? Can we run out of His sight, and beyond His power?" So Herbert, speaking of Curroon, says, "That year his empire was so wounded with God's arrows of plague, pestilence, and famine, as this thousand years before was never so terrible."*c*

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—4. (1) set thy face, as if directing thy message. (3) mountains, *etc.*, Palestine was a hilly, though it can hardly be called a mountainous country. rivers, or ravines.[a] (4) images, or sun-images, Le. xxvi. 30.[b] slain . . idols, to show the manifest connection between idolatry and calamity, and to put the idol-trusting to shame.

Preachers to be acquainted with human nature.—Michael Angelo, when painting an altar-piece in the conventual church, in Florence, in order that the figures might be as death-like as possible, obtained permission of the prior to have the coffins of the newly-buried opened and placed beside him during the night; an appalling expedient, but successful in enabling him to reproduce with terrible effect, not the mortal pallor only, but the very anatomy of death. If we would preach well to the souls of men, we must acquaint ourselves with their ruined state, must have their case always on our hearts both by night and day, must know the terrors of the Lord and the value of the soul, and feel a sacred sympathy with perishing sinners. There is no masterly, prevailing preaching without this.[c]

5—7. (5) dead carcases, of those killed by famine and the sword. bones, said to intimate that no decent burial should be given to the dead bodies.[a] (6) works, *i.e.* your idols, which are not gods, but the mere work of *men's* hands. (7) I . . Lord, by the display of My glory as the "All-powerful punisher of sin."[b]

False religion and its doom (*v.* 5).—Man says he wants sincerity and earnestness. What God asks is truth. the one religion which He has revealed. I. False religion: there is such a thing; it may be earnest and zealous, yet false. II. Its uselessness: it profits nobody. either here or hereafter; is not acceptable to God. III. Its hatefulness: God abhors it; it is outward. untrue, against His revelation; dishonouring, self-exalting. IV. Its doom: its condemnation is—1. Certain; 2. Utter; 3. Visible; 4. Expressive; 5. Contemptuous: 6. Everlasting. Apply:—(1) See that your religion is true; (2) Your worship real.[c]—*The end is come* (*v.* 5).—I. The end of the year. It should be a season—1. Of thanksgiving; 2. Of self-examination; 3. Of confession; 4. Of devout contemplation. II. The end of life. It is the end of—1. Our abode on earth; 2. Of our present enjoyments; 3. Our present employments; 4. Our present sorrows: 5. Our present connections; 6. Our present privileges. III. The end of the world. 1. It will be the close of time; 2. The introduction of an unalterable state of rewards and punishments; 3. It will be the epoch of Christ's glorious manifestation.[d]

8—10. (8) a remnant, Is. iv. 2; Je. xliv. 14. (9) remember me, when under the pressure of calamity, they would. in penitence, turn thought and heart to God. (9) broken, Je. xxiii. 9. The pass. may read, "I have broken their whorish heart," etc.[a] (10) said in vain, *i.e.* without adequate cause, or full intention and power to execute.

Conscience.—The following remarkable instance of the force of conscience occurred, in 1835, in the neighbourhood of London.

[a] Mentioned as the favourite seat of idol rites, just as hill-tops were.

[b] 2 Chr. xxxiv. 4; Is. xvii. 8.

We get life, as we lost it; both the one and the other independently of ourselves. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

[c] *Spurgeon.*

[a] Comp. 2 Ki. xxiii. 14, 16.

[b] "Importing that the judgments God intended to bring upon the Jews, would make the most hardened and stupid sinners sensible that this was God's hand."—*Lowth.*

[c] *Dr. H. Bonar.*

With love, the heart becomes a fair and fertile garden, with sunshine and warm hues, and exhaling sweet odours; but without it, it is a bleak desert covered with ashes.

[d] *G. Brooks.*

[a] Or *made contrite.*

"When they that escape shall, in the land of their exile, remember Me, when they shall loathe themselves for their sins—then at last

shall they know that I am the Lord, and that My purpose in pronouncing their doom has not been in vain." —*Spk. Com.*

"The testimony of a good conscience will make the comforts of heaven descend upon man's weary head, like a refreshing dew or shower upon a parched land; it will give him lively earnests and secret anticipations of approaching joy; it will bid his soul go out of the body undauntedly, and lift up his head with confidence before saints and angels. The comfort which it conveys is greater than the capacities of mortality can appreciate, mighty and unspeakable, and not to be understood as it is felt." —*Dr. South.*

b R. T. S.

a Nu. xxiv. 10; Eze. xxi. 17.

b "In indignation at the abominations of Israel, extend thine hand towards Judæa, as if about to 'strike' and 'stamp,' shaking off the dust with thy foot, in token of how God shall 'stretch out His hand upon them,' and tread them down."—*Fausset.*

c Je. ii. 20; Ho. iv. 13.

d Nu. xxxiii. 46 Je. xlviii. 22.

"The name, in the modified form Diblathan, is found on the Moabite stone." —*Spk. Com.*

"A good conscience is a lady, of about thirty-eight years of age, elegantly dressed, entered the shop of Mr. ——, a respectable pastrycook, in a state of great mental excitement, and inquired if Mr. —— were still alive. On being answered in the affirmative, she, in the most earnest manner, begged to see him. Being engaged in superintending the making of some confectionery, he begged to be excused, and referred her to his daughter, who, he said, would wait upon her. The daughter immediately withdrew with her into the parlour, when, after sitting a few moments in silence, she burst into a flood of tears. When she became more composed, she stated that upwards of twenty years since she was a boarder at a highly respectable boarding school in that neighbourhood, which school Mr. —— had for nearly forty years supplied with pastry, etc., and while there, she was in the habit of abstracting small articles from his tray, unknown to the person who brought it. She had now been married some years, was the mother of six children, and in the possession of every comfort this world could afford; but still the remembrance of her youthful sin had so haunted her conscience, that she was never happy. Her husband, perceiving her unhappiness, had, after many fruitless endeavours, at last got possession of the cause, when he advised her, for the easement of her conscience, to see if Mr. —— were alive, and to make him or his family a recompense: and as she was going to leave London on the following day, perhaps for ever, she had then come for that purpose. Mr. ——, on being informed of the object of her visit, told her not to make herself any longer unhappy, as she was not the only young lady who had acted in that manner. After begging his forgiveness, which he most readily granted, she insisted on his acceptance of a sum of money, which, she said, she believed was about the value of the articles she had stolen; and after remaining about an hour, she departed, evidently much happier." *b*

11—14. (11) **smite . . foot,** *a* gestures indicating deep concern at the wickedness of the people. *b* "Call attention by acts of grief and consternation." (12) **far off,** *i.e.* out of reach of the perils of the siege. **remaineth,** in the city. (13) **slain . . altars,** *vv.* 4. 5. **hill,** *etc.*, noted places for idolatrous worship. *c* **sweet savour,** Heb. *savour of rest*, Ge. viii. 21. "Applied to idol sacrifices in ivory." (14) **Diblath,** part of the desert towards Moab. *d*

Note on v. 14.—"The land shall be utterly spoiled.—I will make the land more desolate than the wilderness." "The temples are thrown down; the palaces demolished; the ports filled up; the towns destroyed; and the earth, stripped of inhabitants, seems a dreary burying-place." (Volney.) "Good God!" exclaims the same writer, "from whence proceed such melancholy revolutions? For what cause is the fortune of these countries so strikingly changed? Why are so many cities destroyed? Why is not that ancient population reproduced and perpetuated?" "I wandered over the country; I traversed the provinces; I enumerated the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumæa, of Jerusalem and Samaria. This Syria, said I to myself, now almost depopulated, then contained a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages, and hamlets. What are become of so many productions of the hands of man? What are become of those ages of abundance and of life?" etc. Seeking to be wise, men

become fools when they trust to their own vain imaginations, and will not look to that Word of God which is as able to confound the wise as to give understanding to the simple." These words, from the lips of a great advocate of infidelity, proclaim the certainty of the truth which he was too blind or bigoted to see. For not more unintentionally or unconsciously do many illiterate Arab pastors or herdsman verify one prediction, while they literally tread Palestine under foot, than Volney, the academician, himself verifies another, while, speaking in his own name, and the spokesman also of others, he thus confirms the unerring truth of God's holy word by what he said, as well as by describing what he saw.[c]

science is to the soul what health is to the body; it preserves a constant ease and serenity within us, and more than countervails all the calamities and afflictions which can possibly befall us."—*Addison.*

e Keith.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1—4. (1) moreover, *etc.*, the ch. beginning thus is a dirge rather than a prophecy. Only three or four years were to intervene before the final overthrow of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans. (2) land of Israel, this is the term for the whole land that is used after the captivity of the northern nation.[a] four corners, or wings ;[b] fig. to include the whole land. (3) recompense, *etc.*, God speaks of the people's sin as if it had been a personal injury to Him. (4) not spare, or set limits to the calamities that are coming. Punishment and bitter suffering is necessary to reveal the hateful character of sin.

Desolation of Judæa.—It is no "secret malediction," spoken of by Volney, which God has pronounced against Judæa. It is the curse of a broken covenant that rests upon the land ; the consequences of the iniquities of the people, not of those only who have been plucked from off it and scattered throughout the world, but of those also that dwell therein. The ruins of empires originated, not from the regard which mortals paid to revealed religion, but from causes diametrically the reverse. The desolations are not of Divine appointment, but only as they have followed the violations of the laws of God, or have arisen from thence. And none other curses have come upon the land than those that are written in the Book. The character and condition of the people are not less definitely marked than the features of the land that has been smitten with a curse because of their iniquities. And when the unbeliever asks, Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto the land? the same word which foretold that the question would be put, supplies an answer and assigns the cause.[c]

a Mal. i. 1, ii. 11.

"Possibly Manasseh and his successors in the kingdom of Judah had the dominion of the whole land of Canaan, formerly divided into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, as tributaries under the kings of Assyria."—*Prideaux.*

b Nu. xxiv. 17.

"What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted? Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just; and he but naked, though locked up in steel, whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."—*Shakespeare.*

c Keith.

5—9. (5) an only evil, *i.e.* a singular evil, with none to match it. Or an unrelieved evil, which shall have no mitigations. (6) the end, the final manifestation of the Divine judgment on the land. watcheth, or wakes up for thee. (7) morning, or beginning of the day of doom. sounding, or echo : *i.e.* it is a reality, and no mere echo of the mountains.[a] (8) shortly, in a very few years ; at most three or four. (9) not spare, *v.* 4.

Sin in blossom (*v.* 5).—The teaching of the figure before us is— I. That beauty may be associated with evil, as beauty of countenance, Absalom, poetry, eloquence, art, magnificent mansions and picturesque acres. II. That success is no test of moral right or wrong. III. That the forces of retribution are ever at work.[b]

a Rather, the noise you hear is the rushing of the enemy to destroy you.

"How in the looks does conscious guilt appear!"—*Ovid.*

b U. R. Thomas.

10—15. (10) rod . . blossomed, a fig. to represent the fact that the iniquity of Judah was now full, and demanded immediate Divine interference.[a] Some refer the fig. to the blossoming of the Chaldæan power. (11) rod of wickedness, or a rod that must punish wickedness.[b] multitude . . theirs, a difficult sentence. Prob. meaning, neither the men themselves, nor any of their belongings, their wives or their children.[c] (12) day, *i.e.* the day of doom.[d] (13) not return, to occupy his land, the lease of which he sells. neither . . life, better, "Neither shall any strengthen for himself his life by his iniquity." (14) none . . battle, bec. of failing hearts. (15) sword, *etc.*, v. 2. vi. 12, etc.

The morning gone forth (*v.* 10).—This alludes to the punishment of the children of Israel ; and Jehovah, through His servant, addresses the people in Eastern language : "The morning is gone forth." Their wickedness, their violence, had grown into a rod to punish them. The idea is implied in the Tamul translation also. "Yes, wretch, the rod has long been growing for thee ; 'tis now ready, they may now cut it." "True, true, the man's past crimes are as so many rods for him."[e]

16—19. (16) doves, noted for the mournfulness of their note, and their fond attachment to their homes and mates.[a] (17) hands . . feeble, for the fig. see Job iv. 3, 4. ; Is. xxxv. 3. be weak, lit. *go*, yield as water. (18) gird, *etc.*, Is. xv. 3 ; Je. xlviii. 37. baldness, Is. xxii. 12 ; comp. De. xiv. 1. (19) cast, *etc.*, this would be done in the misery of famine, when they found gold and silver could feed nobody.[b] stumblingblock, curse was on the gold and silver because they had made idol gods, and ornaments for idol gods with it.[c]

Doves mourning.—This is a most strikingly apt simile to all who have heard the sound made by the turtle dove. In the woods of Africa I have often listened to the sound of the turtle dove's apparent mourning and lamentations, uttered incessantly for hours together—indeed, without a moment's intermission. In a calm, still morning, when everything in the wilderness is at rest, no sound can be more plaintive, pitiful, and melancholy. It would cause gloom to arise in the most sprightly mind,—it rivets the ear to it,—the attention is irresistibly arrested.[d]

20—22. (20) beauty . . ornament, prob. referring to God's temple. images, of their idol gods. set . . them, or made it as an unclean thing ; given it into the hands of the Gentiles. (21) strangers, barbarous and savage nations.[a] (22) face . . them, so as not to interfere and defend the holy place from their outrages. robbers, *lit.* "men making breaches."

Strangers.—Instead of abiding under a settled and enlightened government, Judæa has been the scene of frequent invasions, "which have introduced a succession of foreign nations (des peuples étrangers)." "When the Ottomans took Syria from the Mamelouks, they considered it as the spoil of a vanquished enemy. According to this law, the life and property of the vanquished belong to the conqueror. The Government is far from disapproving of a system of robbery and plunder which it finds so profitable" (Volney).[b]

23—27. (23) make a chain, *comp.* Je. xxvii. 2. A chain is the symbol of captivity.[a] bloody crimes, rather, *judgment of*

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[a] "Wickedness daily spreads and increases, till it becomes ripe for judgment."—*Lowth.*
[b] "The violence and fury of the enemy have risen up so as to become a rod to punish the wickedness of the people."—*Spk. Com.*
[c] "Trans. 'There is nothing of them, of their multitude, of their crowds; and there is no eminence among them.'"—*Revised Eng. Bible.*
[d] Joel ii. 2 ; Zep. i. 14.
[e] *Roberts.*

[a] "As doves, whose natural abode is the valleys, when driven by fear into the mountains mourn lamentably, so shall the remnant, who have escaped actual death, moan in the land of their exile."—*Spk. Com.*
[b] "Their wealth will not procure them the necessaries of life under the straits of famine, or miseries of bondage."—*Lowth.*
[c] Eze. xiv. 3, xvi. 17, xliv. 12.
[d] *Campbell.*

[a] "The God of Jerusalem *gives* the temple into the hands of the Chaldæans, and He uses them, wicked as they are, as His own instruments for punishing His people for the sins by which they pollute the city and the temple."—*Wordsworth.*
[b] *Keith.*

[a] "It was customary to lead

blood, *i.e.* "murder committed with hypocritical formalities of justice." (24) worst, the most cruel and terrible.[b] pomp . . strong, or the pride of power, Le. xxvi. 19. their holy places, God no longer owns them as His.[c] (25) destruction, or cutting off. (26) mischief, Is. xlvii. 11. seek a vision, *comp.* Je. xxxvii. 17, xxxviii. 14. (27) king . . troubled, general consternation making all the leaders and counsellors of the land helpless.

War.—Seneca, the great moralist of antiquity, is still more strong in his condemnation of war. "How are we to treat our fellow creatures? Shall we not spare the effusion of blood? How small a matter not to hurt him to whom we are bound by every obligation to do all the good in our power! Some deeds, which are considered as villanous while capable of being prevented, become honourable and glorious when they rise above the control of law. The very things which, if men had done them in their private capacity, they would expiate with their lives, we extol when perpetrated in regimentals at the bidding of a general. We punish murders and massacres committed among private persons; but what do we with wars, the glorious crime of murdering whole nations? Here avarice and cruelty know no bounds; enormities forbidden in private persons are actually enjoined by legislatures, and every species of barbarity authorised by decrees of the senate, and votes of the people."

away captives in a row with a chain passed from the neck of one to the other."—*Fausset.*

b De. xxviii. 49, 50.

c Jerome.

"This expression appears to indicate that at this time the Bab. empire contained in it an element of rude, rough, and uncultivated warriors, while at the same time there must have been a highly civilised population long settled in Nineveh or Babylon."—*Ewald.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—4. (1) elders, those carried away with Jehoiachin, and now at the Chebar. These had come to inquire of the Lord, through His Prophet. hand . . me, ch. i. 3. (2) likeness, *etc.*, comp. ch. i. 26, 27. loins . . fire, to intimate the vengeance of God kindled against the wicked Jews. amber, ch. i. 4. (3) form of a hand, *comp.* Da. v. 5. in the visions, *i.e.* he seems to have all these things done to him in the vision. door . . gate, *i.e.* the entrance to the court of the priests. image of jealousy, some idol figure that provoked Jehovah to jealousy.[a] (4) glory . . there, showing plainly that it was the residence of Jehovah alone. Ref. is to the Shekinah cloud.[b]

Amber (Heb., *chasmal*; Greek, *electron*) is supposed to be a fossil resin, which is most likely the case, leaves and insects being often found embedded in it. It is one of the most electric substances known, and, by friction, produces light in the dark. By rubbing a piece of this substance briskly till it became heated, it was found to attract and repel light bodies. This principle was called electricity, from the Greek word electron, amber. Amber is a substance somewhat harder than resin, transparent, of a yellowish colour, bitter in taste, something like myrrh, and capable of a bright polish; on account of which the ancients reckoned it among gems of the first class, and employed it in all kinds of ornamental dress. Malte Brun conjectures that the aromalites, or aromatic stone of the ancients, was amber. The colour which resembled wax and honey-yellow was most esteemed by them, not only for beauty, but for solidity. The high esteem in which it is held is shown by the statement of Pliny that, in his days, a small piece of amber was more than

a Comp. 2 Ki. xvi. 10—15, xxi. 7.

b "Ezekiel has this repeated vision of the glory of God to aggravate the sin of Israel, in changing their own God, the God of Israel (who is a God of so much glory as here He appears to be), for dunghill gods, scandalous god., false gods, and indeed no gods."—*Mat. Henry.*

The ancients used amber as a medicine. How the Hebrews obtained it we are not told. But as the Phœnicians traded with Spain, there is very little doubt but that they carried it to Tyre. A classic writer asserts that the

Phœnicians brought amber from the Northern Sea.

"Every man is a volume, if you know how to read him."—*W. Ellery Channing.*

equal in value to a strong and robust slave. It is used in this country for making necklaces, snuff-boxes, and bracelets, etc. And Easterns, at the present day, make mouthpieces to their tobacco pipes of the same material, which they highly prize. It is sometimes used for money. A traveller writes, "We paid for what we wanted in little coarse pieces of amber." This substance is found in different parts of the world; but mostly on the shores of the Baltic Sea. It is met with floating on the coast, particularly after tempests; and in beds of wood coal in different parts of Europe,—often in mines far from the sea, and in Birmah. As many as one hundred and fifty tons were picked up in one year on the seashore near Pillau, in Prussia.

5, 6. (5) toward the north, *comp.* 2 Ki. xvi. 14.[a] the altar, *i.e.* the great altar of burnt-offering. (6) great abominations, by thus in the most insulting way setting up an idol image right in front of Jehovah's shrine. go . . sanctuary, being compelled to forsake it, and deliver it up to its pollution.[b]

Predictions of Ezekiel.—Most of the earlier predictions of the Book of Ezekiel have respect to the remnant of the nation left in Judæa, and to the further judgments impending over them, such as the siege and sacking of Jerusalem—the destruction of the Temple—the slaughter of a large portion of its inhabitants—and the abduction of the remainder into a foreign land. The date of the first chapter is about six years prior to the occurrence of these events, and the vision which it contains was undoubtedly designed to exhibit a visible symbol of the Divine glory which dwelt among that nation. The tokens of Jehovah's presence constituted the distinguishing honour of Israel, and its departure from among them would consequently form the essence of their national calamities, and swell them indefinitely beyond all similar disasters which could possibly befall any other people. Plain intimations of the abandonment of the Holy City by the emblems of the Lord's glory are interspersed through several ensuing chapters, till we come to the tenth, where the same splendid image is again brought to view, and is now exhibited in the act of forsaking its ancient dwelling-place. The first chapter describes what their treasure was; the tenth, the loss of it. Together with this, the latter contains several additional particulars in the description of the vision, which are all important to its explication. By keeping in mind this general view of the contents of these chapters, the reader will find himself assisted in giving that significancy to each, which he was probably before at a loss to discover. It may be here remarked, that the symbol of the Divine glory described by Ezekiel was not designed as a mere temporary emblem, adapted only to that occasion, but that it is a permanent one, of which we have repeated intimations in the Scriptures. It is from this fact, chiefly, that it derives its importance as an object of investigation.[c]

a "The locality of the idol enhances the heinousness of the sin before God's own altar."—*Fausset.*

b Comp. Eze. vii. 21, 22, x. 18.

c *Bush.*

"Books are a guide in youth, and an entertainment for age. They support us under solitude, and keep us from becoming a burden to ourselves. They help us to forget the crossness of men and things, compose our cares and our passions, and lay our disappointments asleep. When we are weary of the living, we may repair to the dead, who have nothing of peevishness, pride, or design in their conversation."—*Collier.*

7—11. (7) hole in the wall, through which he could see into one of the very side chambers of the sanctuary itself. This is more prob. than that the chamber was in the outer wall of the Temple.[a] (8) dig, *etc.*, the secrecy of these rites is thus forcibly indicated: the ordinary entrance had been covered up, and some secret entrance made, poss. through the other rooms. Or the very chamber itself may have been secretly made in the foun-

a No indignity could be so great as making a very portion of the sanctuary a place of idolatrous rites.

b Reference is

dations. (9) go in, so as to get demonstration of the evil. (10) pourtrayed, *etc.*, these pictures were objects of worship.[b] (11) seventy, *etc.*, a company of the elders or leaders of the nation. Poss. members of the great council, or Sanhedrim.

The chamber of imagery (*vv.* 7—12).—From this vision we learn the following truths. I. That man has a wonderful power of vision beyond that of the senses. 1. Through this power God frequently reveals the greatest truths; 2. Through it man will derive much of his happiness or misery for ever. II. That the degenerating tendency in the most advanced people has ever been strong. This—1. Repudiates the atheistic notion that the original state of man was that of savageism, and confirms the Biblical doctrine, that God made man upright, etc.; 2. Shows that it behoves the most advanced people to be humble. III. That the greatest sins of humanity are generally the hidden ones. 1. Man has power to conceal his sins; 2. That as a sinner he has the strongest reasons for concealment. IV. That an insight of the hidden iniquity of a population is a necessary qualification for a true reformer. 1. It serves to impress him with the justice of human suffering: 2. Also with the greatness of God's love in redemption; 3. With the sublime mission of Christianity. V. That the most hidden sins are destined to be exposed. Of this exposure of sin there are two kinds. 1. Unconscious; 2. Conscious. VI. That a practical disregard of the constant presence and inspection of God is an explanation of all sin 1. Because the realising of God's presence implies supreme love to Him; 2. If men love Him supremely, they will have no room in their hearts for idols.[c]

Caves.—Caves, and other similar subterraneous recesses, consecrated to the worship of the sun, were very generally, if not universally, in request among nations where that superstition was practised. The mountains of Chusistan at this day abound with stupendous excavations of this sort. Allusive to this kind of cavern temple, and this species of devotion, are these words of Ezekiel. The Prophet in a vision beholds, and in the most sublime manner stigmatises, the horrible idolatrous abominations which the Israelites had borrowed from their Asiatic neighbours of Chaldæa. Egypt, and Persia. "And he brought me (says the Prophet) to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall; and, when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And he said unto me, Go in (that is, into this cavern temple), and behold the wicked abominations that they do there. So I went in, and saw, and behold, every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, were portrayed upon the wall round about." In this subterraneous temple were seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and their employment was of a nature very nearly similar to that of the priests in Salsette. "They stood with every man his censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery?" In Egypt, to the particular idolatry of which country, it is plain, from his mentioning every form of creeping thing and abominable beasts, the Prophet in this place alludes, these dark, secluded recesses were called evidently to the Egyptian form of idolatry.

"Belzoni's discoveries brought to light many subterranean chambers in rocks upon the shores of the Nile. These were used as sepulchres both for kings and private persons. The walls were uniformly adorned by painted figures . . . and by hieroglyphical characters, some of wh. were representative of the objects of idolatrous worship."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] *Dr. Thomas.*

"Conscience is justice's best minister: it threatens, promises, rewards, and punishes, and keeps all under its control: the busy must attend to its remonstrances, the most powerful submit to its reproof, and the angry endure its upbraidings. While conscience is our friend, all is peace; but if once offended, farewell the tranquil mind."—*Hon Mrs. Montague*

Bessus, a Grecian, gave as a reason for pulling down the birds' nests about his house, that the birds never ceased to accuse him of the murder of his father.

d Maurice.

a As *vr.* 7, 8.
b "Every one of the 70 elders had his own imagery, his favourite object of idolatrous worship portrayed upon the wall of the chamber; and to it he did homage with his censer, according to the device of his own heart."—*Wordsworth.*
c "This was a form of Nature-worship. It was a festival held when Nature in the E. seems to wither and die under the scorching heat of the sun, to burst forth again into life in due season. The death of Adonis symbolised the suspension of the productive powers of Nature, wh. were in due time revived. The excitement of the festival led to unbridled license and excess."—*Biblical Things.*
d Bush.

a Joel ii. 17.
b "To understand this clearly it should be observed that, as if purposely to prevent the abomination referred to, the entrance of the temple was on the E. side of the building, so that, in looking towards it in worship, the worshippers necessarily turned their backs upon the sun at its rising in the E., at wh. time the luminary was most usually worshipped. These men being

mystic cells, and in them were celebrated the secret mysteries of Isis and Osiris, represented by the quadrupeds sacred to those deities.[d]

12—14. (12) **in the dark, or in secret.**[a] **chambers . . imagery,** or his chambers painted with images.[b] **Lord . . earth,** ch. ix. 9. This they inferred from God's permitting national calamities to come unchecked. (13, 14) **weeping for Tammuz,** or Adonis, poss. the same as Osiris, a symbol of the sun.[c] "The sun-god mourned by his lover Astarte, the personification of vegetable and animal life, at his departure in the decline of the year to dwell in the region of gloom with Persephone."

The Prophet Ezekiel.—The Prophet Ezekiel holds a conspicuous place among the writers of the Old Testament, although, from the highly figurative style of his predictions, a greater degree of obscurity has been supposed to attach to this book than perhaps to any other, except the Revelations, in the whole sacred canon. This remark applies peculiarly to the first and tenth chapters of the book, which contain the description of a remarkable emblematical vision, presented, indeed, under some variations of aspect in each, but in its general features manifestly the same. These chapters, together with the nine last, are said to have been reckoned so sacredly obscure by the ancient Jews, that they abstained from reading them till they were thirty years of age. The mystery appears to have been but little abated by time, as the great mass of commentators still speak of the unpenetrated veil of symbolical darkness in which the Prophet's meaning is wrapped, and the common readers of Scripture reiterate the lamentation; although doubtless every portion of the inspired writings is just as luminous and intelligible as infinite Wisdom saw best it should be; and it is a feature of revelation worthy of that Wisdom, that it is adapted to every stage of progress and attainment in spiritual knowledge. While in some parts, and those the most important, it levels itself to the capacity of a child, in others it gives scope to the intellect of an angel.[d]

15—18. (15, 16) **inner court,** that of the priests. **between . . altar,** positions which even the priests only took on the most solemn occasions, and then they turned to the west of the temple.[a] **faces . . east,** offering thus the insult of their backs to Jehovah, and the worship of their faces to the sun.[b] (17) **branch . . nose,** "as the Persians, who, when worshipping the rising sun, held a tamarisk branch in their hands."[c] Perhaps in contempt Ezekiel puts the *nose* instead of the *mouth*, before which the branch was properly held.[d] (18) **not spare,** ch. v. 11.

Hidden abominations exposed (*v.* 15).—Apply this passage—I. To the world. 1. The abominations that are visible to all are exceeding great; 2. But the more we know of the world, the more wicked will it appear. II. The Church. 1. The outward court worshippers are, for the most part, exceedingly corrupt; 2. Would to God we could except from this censure the worshippers of the inner court. III. The heart. 1. This, the Prophet tells us, is superlatively deceitful; 2. It is also, as the same Prophet informs us, unsearchably wicked. Behold here then—(1) The folly of man; (2) The forbearance of God; (3) The wonders of Redeeming Love.[e]

Sun-worship.—This last expression undoubtedly alludes to some particular ceremony belonging to their idolatrous worship. Mr. Lowth (*On the Prophets*) says, the words may refer to a custom among the idolaters of dedicating a branch of laurel, or some other tree, to the honour of the sun, and carrying it in their hands at the time of their worship. Lewis observes, that the most reasonable exposition is that the worshipper, with a wand in his hand, would touch the idol, and then apply the stick to his nose and mouth, in token of worship and adoration.*f*

compelled to make a choice, chose to turn their backs to the temple, and their faces to the sun, rather than their backs to the sun, and their faces to the temple."—*Kitto.*

c Wordsworth.

d Hengstenberg.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

f Burder.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—4. (1) **loud voice,** as giving a command requiring immediate attention. **have charge,** *i.e.* the angels charged to execute God's judgments on the city.*a* **draw near,** quickly; ready to act at once. (2) **slaughter weapon,** such as Levites used for preparing the sacrifices. **one man,** the leader of them. **linen,** the dress of the priests, and symbol of purity. **inkhorn . . side,***b* it was quite usual for scribes to carry the receptacle for ink and pen stuck in their girdle. (3) **gone up,** departed from the inner sanctuary to the threshold, as a step towards forsaking His temple. The glory tarried awhile only to give the waiting officers their commission of vengeance. (4) **mark,***c* to indicate that such should be spared. **sigh,** *etc.*, in their grief at the iniquity around them.

Christians a living protest against sin (*v.* 4).—I. God's people described. 1. They are sighing ones, sorrowing; 2. They are crying ones, protesting. II. Their peculiar mark, a mark of—1. Separation: 2. Service; 3. A visible mark; 4. A mark of safety.*d*—*Retribution* (*vv.* 4. 5).—I. That the chief distinction between man is moral. 1. Not unreasoning caprice; 2. Nor any material characteristics; 3. Nor any mental qualities. II. That the results of this distinction are tremendous. III. That the Divine superintendence of human destiny is perfect. 1. The moral character and condition are now conspicuous; 2. The arrangement is divine.*e*

Mark on the forehead.—Mr. Maurice, speaking of the religious rites of the Hindoos, says, before they can enter the great pagoda, an "indispensable ceremony takes place, which can only be performed by the hand of a Brahmin; and that is, the impressing of their foreheads with the *tiluk*, or mark of different colours, as they may belong either to the sect of Veeshnu, or Seeva. If the temple be that of Veeshnu, their foreheads are marked with a longitudinal line, and the colour used is vermilion. If it be the temple of Seeva, they are marked with a parallel line, and the colour used is turmeric, or saffron. But these two grand sects being again subdivided into numerous classes, both the size and the shape of the *tiluk* are varied in proportion to their superior or inferior rank. In regard to the *tiluk*, I must observe, that it was a custom of very ancient date in Asia to mark their servants in the forehead. It is alluded to in these words of Ezekiel, where the Almighty commands his angels to "go through the midst of the city, and set a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh for the abominations committed in the midst thereof." The same idea occurs also in Rev. vii. 3.*f*

a Comp. 2 Ki. x. 24.

b "The form in most general use is a flat case about nine inches long, by an inch and a quarter broad, and half an inch thick, the hollow of which serves to contain the reed, pens, and penknife. It is furnished at one end with a lid attached by a hinge. To the flat end of the shaft towards the end furnished with the lid is soldered the ink-vessel, which has at the top a hinge, and a clasp fitting very closely. The ink-vessel is usually twice as heavy as the shaft. The latter is passed thro' the girdle, and prevented from slipping through by the projecting ink-vessel. The whole is usually of polished metal, brass, silver, or copper."—*Kitto.*

c Re. vii. 1.

The mark to be put is the Heb. letter *Tau*, wh. is in form something like a cross.

d W. W. Whythe.

e U. R. Thomas.

f Burder.

5—7. (5) smite, all that have not the mark of v. 4. (6) begin . . sanctuary, where idolatry was most shamefully developed. This work of destruction was in fact done by the Chaldæans.[a] ancient men, ch. viii. 11, 12, 16. (7) defile the house, this was done by shedding human blood in it, and leaving in it dead bodies.[b]

Preaching: its force the main consideration.—I had tried to drive certain long brass-headed nails into a wall, but had never succeeded except in turning up their points, and rendering them useless. When a tradesman came who understood his work, I noticed that he filed off all the points of the nails, the very points upon whose sharpness I had relied; and when he had quite blunted them, he drove them in as far as he pleased. With some consciences our fine points in preaching are worse than useless. Our keen distinctions and nice discriminations are thrown away on many; they need to be encountered with sheer force and blunt honesty. The truth must be hammered into them by main strength, and we know from whom to seek the needed power.[c]

8—11. (8) left, bec. the avengers were gone forth from the temple to slay in the city. Then the Prophet intercedes. (9) full of blood, the sign of violence. perverseness, or wresting of judgment, ch. viii. 23. (10) not spare, ch. v. 11. (11) reported, his report concerned his safe preservation of God's elect by affixing on them the required mark.

Inkhorn.—This position of the inkhorn of Ezekiel's writer may appear somewhat odd to a European reader, but the custom of placing it by the side continues in the East to this day. Olearius, who takes notice of a way that they have of thickening their ink with a sort of paste they make, or with sticks of indian ink, which is the best paste of all—a circumstance favourable to their sealing with ink—observes that the Persians carried about with them, by means of their girdles, a dagger, a knife, a handkerchief, and their money; and those that follow the profession of writing out books, their inkhorn, their penknife, their whetstone to sharpen it, their letters, and everything, the Muscovites were wont in his time to put in their boots, which served them instead of pockets. The Persians, in carrying their inkhorns after this manner, seem to have retained a custom as ancient as the days of Ezekiel; while the Muscovites, whose garb was very much in the Eastern taste in the days of Olearius, and who had many Oriental customs among them, carried their inkhorns and their papers in a very different manner. Whether some such variations might cause the Egyptian translators of the Septuagint Version to render the words, "a girdle of sapphire, or embroidery, on the loins," I will not take upon me to affirm; but I do not imagine our Dr. Castell would have adopted this sentiment in his Lexicon, had he been aware of this Eastern custom: for with great propriety is the word *keseth* mentioned in this chapter three times, if it signified an inkhorn, the requisite instrument for sealing those devout mourners; but no account can be given why this *keseth* should be mentioned so often, if it only signified an "embroidered girdle." As to the other point relating to the Arab seals, their having no figures upon them, only an inscription; it is to be thought that those of the Jews were in like manner without any images, since they were as scrupulous as the Moham-

a 2 Chr. xxxvi. 17.

"Judgment often begins at the house of God, bec. such persons sin against greater light and clearer convictions."—*Lowth.*

b Nu. xix. 11.

"Every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great or original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished."—*Wordsworth.*

c *Spurgeon.*

Dr. Thompson, speaking of one of these scribes or letter-writers, says:—"This is a sort of Moslem confessional, and that fellow's head must be crammed with the secrets and the scandal of half the city. No matter; I suppose, like other confessors, he keeps dark and may be trusted. Still, this letter writing would not be a very thriving business in our own country."

"Consider! except a living man, there is nothing more wonderful than a book! a message to us from the dead; from human souls whom we never saw, who lived perhaps thousands of miles away; and yet these, in those little sheets of paper, speak to us, amuse us, terrify us, teach us, comfort us, open their hearts to us as brothers."—*C. Kingsley.*

medans can be; and from hence it will appear that it was extremely natural for St. Paul to make a seal and an inscription equivalent terms in 2 Tim. ii. 19: "The foundation of God standeth sure, having His seal," this inscription, "The Lord knoweth those that are His; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." [a]

[a] *Harmer.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1—4. (1) firmament, *etc.*, comp. ch. i. 26. sapphire stone, Ex. xxiv. 10. (2) he spake, *i.e.* the being seated on the thrones. cherub, *i.e.* the fourfold fig. described in ch. i. coals, with which to burn up, or destroy, the city.[a] (3) right side, or north side. cloud . . court, *i.e.* the Shekinah cloud was moved from the entrance of the sanctuary, and filled the priest's court.[b] (4) went up, as if ascending and passing away.

Divine forces and human agents in retribution (*v.* 2).—I. That there are in the economy of God terrific forces for the destruction of evil. II. That the great forces provided against evil will often be used by the instrumentality of man.[c]

[a] For coals of fire as denoting the Divine vengeance. see Ps. cxx. 4, cxl. 10; Re. viii. 5.

[b] "The Shekinah, or Divine glory, is represented as a bright flame breaking out of a thick cloud."—*Lowth.*

[c] *U. R. Thomas.*

5—7. (5) sound . . wings, ch. i. 24. The cherubic figure appears to move, as if in close attendance on the Divine glory. (6) take fire, *v.* 2. (7) clothed with linen, symbol of his priestly office; but now he has to become a minister of Divine vengeance. took . . went out, to put the command at once into execution.

Angels: their interest in man.—Angels were in the full exercise of their powers, even at the first infancy of our species, and shared in the gratulations of that period when, at the birth of humanity, all intelligent nature felt a gladdening impulse, and the morning stars sung together for joy. They loved even as with the love which a family on earth bears to a younger sister, and the very childhood of our tinier faculties did only serve the more to endear us to them; and though born at a later hour in creation, did they regard us as heirs of the same destiny with themselves, to rise along with them in the scale of moral elevation, to bow at the same footstool, and to partake in those high dispensations of a parent's kindness, and a parent's care, which are ever emanating from the throne of the Eternal on all the members of a duteous and affectionate family. We cannot but remark how fine a harmony there is between the law of sympathetic nature in heaven, and the most touching exhibitions of it on the face of our world. When one of a numerous household droops under the power of disease, is not that the one to whom all the tenderness is turned, and who in a manner monopolises the inquiries of his neighbourhood, and the care of his family? When the sighing of the midnight storm sends a dismal foreboding into the mother's heart, to whom of all her offspring, we would ask, are her thoughts and anxieties then wandering? Is it not to her sailor boy, whom her fancy has placed amid the rude and angry surges of the ocean? Does not this, the hour of his apprehended danger, concentrate upon him the whole force of her wakeful meditations? And does not he engross for a season her every sensibility and her every prayer?[a]

"Down thither prone in flight, he speeds and through the vast ethereal sky sails between world and world with steady wings: now on the polar winds, then with quick fan winnows the buxom air."—*Milton.*

"Among the varied external influences amidst which the human race is developed, a book is incomparably the most important, and the only one that is absolutely essential. Upon it the collective education of the race depends. It is the sole instrument of registering, perpetuating, transmitting thought."—*H. Rogers.*

[a] *Dr. Chalmers.*

8—12. (8) man's hand, ch. i. 8. (9) beryl stone, ch. i.

[a] *E. P. Hood.*

16. (10, 11) appearances, *etc.*, ch. i. 13, 15, 17. (12) eyes, ch. i. 18.

The hand and the wing (*v.* 8).—There are two proofs of our religious life—our great thoughts of God; our great deeds for God. In religion, as in life, there are two ideas—the sense of farness, the sense of nearness. I. See what a Divine work creation is. II. Then you see what Divine providence is. III. See in the human hand, beneath the wing of the angel, the relation of a life of action to a life of contemplation. IV. In a word, you see what religion is; it is the human hand beneath the angel's wing.[a]

The ministry of angels.—"Are they not all ministering spirits," says St. Paul, "sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" In this passage we are plainly taught that ministering to the saints is a standing employment of angels throughout the ages of time. Accordingly, they are exhibited in Jacob's vision of the ladder as "ascending and descending" from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven continually in the discharge of this great duty. According to this declaration also we are furnished by the Scriptures with numerous examples of their actual ministry to the children of God. Thus angels delivered Lot from Sodom, Jacob from Esau, Daniel from the lions, his three companions from the fiery furnace, Peter from Herod, and the Jewish Sanhedrim and the nation of the Israelites successively from the Egyptians, Canaanites, and Assyrians. Thus they conducted Lot, Abraham, and the Israelites in seasons of great difficulty and danger to places and circumstances of safety and peace. Thus they conducted Gideon to the destruction of the Midianites, Joseph and Mary to Egypt, Philip to the eunuch, and Cornelius to Peter, to the knowledge of the Gospel through him, and to the salvation of himself, his family, and his friends. Thus angels instructed Abraham, Joshua, Gideon, David, Elijah, Daniel, Zechariah the Prophet, Zachariah the father of John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, and their fellow-disciples. Thus they comforted Jacob at the approach of Esau, Daniel in his peculiar sorrows and dangers, Zechariah in the sufferings of his nation, Joseph and Mary in their perplexities, Christ in His agony, the Apostles and their companions after His resurrection, Paul immediately before his shipwreck, and the Church universally by the testimony and instruction given in the Revelation of St. John.[b]

13–17. (13) O wheel, or *more round*, as if reminding them of their duty.[a] Heb. the *galgal*, or the whirling. These wheels were most rapid in their revolutions. (14) face, *etc.*, ch. i. 10. (15) lifted up, to attend the Divine Glory on this its removal from the Temple. (16) cherubims went, ch. i. 19. (17) spirit . . them, ch. i. 20, 21.

O wheel (*v.* 13).—I shall consider this wheel—I. As emblematical of God's government. II. The propriety of this figure. 1. A wheel is a very curious piece of mechanism; 2. You never see more than half of it at one time; 3. All parts of the circumference are alike near to the centre; 4. It is subject to frequent movements and changes; 5. A wheel is a great assistance to labour. III. Some of the revolutions which prompt the exclamation, O wheel. 1. The gift of a Saviour for a guilty world; 2. Some of the sparing movements; 3. Those events which lead

"Oh! there are no tears in heaven; but when angels come down to earth, it may be they can fall into companionship with human sadness, and even learn to weep; and where is the spectacle which shall wring tears from eyes which they were never meant to stain, if it be not that of the obstinate rejection of the Gospel of reconciliation, and of careless trifling with a thing so inestimably precious as the soul? Old men, buried with your gold! angels weep over you. Young men, frittering away your days in vanities and pleasures! angels weep over you."—*H. Melvill.*

"Books, such as are worthy the name of books, ought to have no patrons but truth and reason."—*Bacon.*

b Dwight.

a Galgal is the whole wheelwork machinery, with its *whirlwind-like rotation*. Their being so addressed is in order to call them immediately to put themselves in rapid motion."—*Fausset.*

"What the gods intend, is theirs alone; let us not bar their great opposeless wills,

to conversion; 4. Unforeseen events leading to unforeseen connections; 5. That cast of the wheel which brings poor sinners to heaven. Improvement:—(1) Mark God's providence—general, particular, or miraculous; (2) Admire God's providence; (3) Trust it; (4) Obey it.[b]

Superintendence of Providence.—

There is a power
Unseen, that rules the illimitable world,
That guides its motions, from the brightest star
To the least dust of this sin-tainted mould;
While man, who madly deems himself the lord
Of all, is nought but weakness, and dependence.
This sacred truth, by sure experience taught,
Thou must have learnt, when wandering all alone;
Each bird, each insect, flitting through the sky,
Was more sufficient for itself than thou.[c]

18—22. (18) departed,[a] moved again, as if ascending. "It now quite leaves the house itself, and settles upon the cherubim which stood in the court adjoining it, *v.* 3." (19) wheels .. them, ch. i. 19, 26. (20) knew .. cherubims, *i.e.* now I recognised that this strange living creature represented the cherubim that guarded the glory, in the holy of holies. (21) hands, ch. i. 8. (22) saw .. Chebar, as narrated in ch. i.

Order of Providence.—

See through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began,
Nature's ethereal, human angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach: from infinite to thee;
From thee to nothing.—On superior powers
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed;
From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth, or ten-thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
And if each system in gradation roll,
Alike essential to the amazing whole,
The least confusion, but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole, must fall.
Let earth, unbalanced, from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heaven's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And nature tremble to the throne of God.
All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—oh, madness! pride! impiety!
What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand to toil, aspired to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear, repined
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?[b]

by seeming more than they would have us be; so shall the chain that links propriety remain unbroken, and the nerve of hope but brace obedience to the will of heaven."—*Havard.*

b M. Wilks.

c Thomson.

a "The cherubim (or chariot) had stood first on the threshold of the temple door, and there received the glory of the Lord. They then lifted their wings, rose and left the temple by the east gate of the outer court, at the entrance of which they now for a time stood. It was by the east gate of the outer court that the glory of the Lord returned to the new temple. Ch. xliii. 4."—*Spk. Com.*

"Nothing but omniscience can outdo the knowledge of angels; a knowledge that dives into all the recesses of nature and spies out all the secret workings of second causes by a certain and immediate view; wh. the quickest human intellect pursues by tedious meditation, dubious conjectures, short experiments, and perhaps after all is forced to sit down in ignorance and dissatisfaction."—*Dr. South.*

b Pope.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—4. (1) lifted me up, ch. iii. 12, 14, viii. 3. east gate, where the glory tarried awhile in its departing. Jaazaniah, *comp.* ch. viii. 11, but the names cannot be identified with any known persons. (2) wicked counsel, esp. in bidding the people not to believe the Divine threatenings by the Prophets. (3) not near, *i.e.* the threatened day of calamity. caldron,[a] likening their safety within the impregnable walls of Jerusalem to the safety of flesh in a caldron, wh. the fire cannot reach.[b] (4) prophesy, declare the denunciations of God against them.

A vision of priesthoods (*vv.* 1—25).—This vision discovers—I The destruction of a corrupt priesthood. 1. Their unhallowed designs and influence; 2. Their contempt of sacred things; 3. Their false security; 4. Their conformity to evil associations; 5. Their liability to terrible retribution. II. The formation of a true priesthood. 1. Divinely collected; 2. Divinely regenerated; 3. Divinely adopted.[c]

5—8. (5) fell upon me, *comp.* ch. iii. 24. (6) multiplied your slain, ch. xxii. 3, 4. (7) flesh, *etc.*, see note on *v.* 3. (8) the sword, or judgment by war.

Providence.—A lady in high life introduced herself to the Rev. Samuel Kilpin's study, with the apology that she thought it her duty to inform him that, some years before, she was passing the street as a stranger on the Sabbath, when seeing many persons enter a passage, she followed them, and found herself within his chapel. Every object was new; but she listened, and was interested in the sermon. Immediately after, she left England, and, with some young friends, became the inmate of a convent in France, to finish their education. While there, every argument was employed to convert them to the Roman Catholic religion. Her English associates were overcome by these persuasions. "Your discourse, sir," said she, "which I could never get from my mind, has been my preservation, from that period to the present, though I have been beset with every snare from family connections," etc. Mr. Kilpin recommended suitable books to her attention, and devoutly committed her to the God of heaven, while she kneeled with him, bathed in tears.[a]

9—12. (9) hands of strangers, who shall carry you into captivity. (10) border of Israel, at Hamath,[a] where the king of Babylon judged and condemned Zechariah, etc.[b] (11) not . . caldron, *i.e.* it shall be no defence from the fire of the Divine indignation. (12) not walked, *etc.*, De. xii. 30, 31.

Home, changed from our youth.—

Our home in youth—no matter to what end:
Study—or strife—or pleasure, or what not:
And coming back in few short years, we find
All as we left it, outside; the old elms,
The house, grass, gates, and latchet's selfsame click;
But lift that latchet—all is changed as doom:
The servants have forgotten our step, and more

a Je. i. 13; Eze. xxiv. 3, 4.

b "These infidels purpose to deride the Prophet; as if they had said—If this city be a caldron, we had rather take our chance of being consumed in it, than leave our fine houses and other accommodations, and run the risk of war or captivity."—*Lowth.*

c *U. R. Thomas.*

"Oh! while you speak, methinks a sudden calm, in spite of all the horror that surrounds me, falls upon every frighted faculty, and puts my soul in tune!"—*Lee.*

a *Whitecross.*

a 1 Ki. viii. 65; 2 Ki. xiv. 25.

b Je. lii. 9, 10.

"Home is the one place in all this world where hearts are sure of each other. It is the place of confidence. It is the place where we tear off that mask of guarded and suspicious coldness which the world forces us to wear in self-defence, and where we pour out the unreserved communications of full

Than half of those who knew us know us not.
Adversity, prosperity, the grave,
Play a round game with friends. On some the world
Hath shot its evil eye, and they have passed
From honour and remembrance, and a stare
Is all the mention of their names receives;
And people know no more of them than of
The shapes of clouds at midnight, a year back.[c]

13—16. (13) Pelatiah, *v.* 1. This stroke of God indicated the destruction of the idolaters, of whom Pelatiah was a leader. full end, or a complete, irremediable destruction.[a] (14, 15) thy brethren, *i.e.* those of thy kindred and acquaintance who are carried captive with thee. us . . possession, *i.e.* those left in Jerusalem regarded their captive brethren as coming under Divine judgments, and themselves as in the Divine favour. (16) little sanctuary,[b] God's presence preserving them in their distant captivity, even as His presence had preserved them in their own land.

A refuge in the time of danger (*v.* 16).—I. The blessing promises—1. A refuge in the time of danger; 2. Continued safety; 3. The bond of their union; 4. The source of their enjoyment. II. The extent of its application. 1. In illustrating the boundless mercy of the Lord: 2. In trusting to an unchanging source of happiness; 3. In pointing out the only centre of union of the whole Church.

Feelings in danger.—A child lies in his little bed in some high chamber of an old castle, and hears the tempest growling in the chimney, and the prowling thief-winds at the window, and the scream of the spirits of the air. The storm rocks the walls, and beats upon the roof; and he shudders and covers his head, and expects at every burst of thunder that the castle will go crashing to the ground. But, down in the room below, his father sits unmoved, reading by the fire; only now and then, when the tempest swells, he raises his spectacles for a moment, and exclaims, "God help the poor wretches on the sea to-night!" or "I hope no belated traveller is out in such a storm as this!" and then turns to his book again. In the morning, the child hardly dares to look forth, lest the heavens and the earth have passed away; but the father only walks into his garden to see if some old tree has been blown down, or some unpropped vine fallen from the trellis. In times of peril and disaster, the Christian, through his faith and hope in God, is like the father by the fire; while he who has no such trust is tormented with fear and apprehension like the child in the chamber.[c]

17—21. (17) gather you, *etc.*, the point seems to be that the earlier captives should return, but the proud remnant then in Jerusalem should be destroyed, or, if taken into captivity, never return from it to their own land. (18) they, *i.e.* the people of the earlier captivities. detestable things, or things associated with idolatry. (19) one heart, a united feeling of devotion to the sole service of God (Is. xxxii. 39).[a] new spirit, *comp.* the stiff-neckedness and rebelliousness which they had formerly shown.[b] stony . . flesh, a fig. peculiar to Ezekiel.[c] (20) my people, as serving Me heartily and sincerely. (21) heart . . heart, a strong expression to indicate that the very essence of

and confiding hearts. It is the spot where expressions of tenderness gush out without any sensation of awkwardness and without any dread of ridicule." — *F. W. Robertson.*

c Baily.

a Comp. Je. iv. 27, v. 10, 18.

b "They have been carried far away from the literal and material sanctuary at Jerusalem, but I Myself will be their sanctuary." — *Wordsworth.*

Is. viii. 14; Ps. xci. 9.

"My shrine is the humble heart—a preparation for Gospel catholicity when the local and material temple should give place to the spiritual." — *Fausset.*

Render, "for a little while a sanctuary."

v. 16. *J. Saurin*, viii. 103; *W. Jay*, iii. 414; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 194.

Talkative persons seldom read. This is among the few truths which appear the more strange the more we reflect upon them. For what is reading but silent conversation?

c Beecher.

a Ac. iv. 32.

b Zec. xii. 10.

"Conversion is commonly spoken of in Scripture as if it were a new creation, because of the new dispositions and powers wh. accompany it." — *Lowth.*

c "The contrast is not, as usual, between the spirit and the flesh, but, between the heart unnaturally hardened, and the heart reawakened to feeling proper to man." —*Spk. Com.*

v. 19. *B. Beddome*, iv. 27; *Dr. R. Harris*, i. 91; *W. Jay*, ix. 23.

The image and likeness of God are to be found not in the face but in the heart.

d *G. Brooks.*

"A heart unspotted is not easily daunted." —*Shakespeare.*

idolatry was pleasing to the very heart of these rebellious people.

Genuine religion (*vv.* 19, 20).—I. Its Author. 1. Explain in what sense; 2. Prove. II. The change which it accomplishes. 1. It harmonises: 2. It renews; 3. It softens. III. The practical influence which it exerts. 1. Obedience to God, which is impartial; 2. Which is constant; 3. Which is decided. IV. The privilege which it confers. 1. Its nature; 2. Its validity; 3. Its effects. Address—(1) Those who are indifferent about this invaluable privilege; (2) Those who are uncertain whether they possess it or not; (3) Those who have attained it.[d]

A new heart—An Indian chief.—The efforts of some Christian missionaries had been the means of diffusing much Scriptural knowledge among the Delaware Indians of North America, and their doctrines were frequently the subject of conversation among them. One evening, Tedynscung, a native chief, was sitting by the fireside of his friend, who mentioned the golden rule to him as very excellent.—"For one man to do to another as he would the other should do to him." "It is impossible!—It cannot be done!" said the Indian chief. After musing for about a quarter of an hour, Tedynscung again gave his opinion, and said, "Brother, I have been thoughtful on what you told me. If the Great Spirit that made man would give him a new heart, he could do as you say, but not else."

22—25. (22) lift up, as in attitude for flying. (23) upon the mountain, *i.e.* the Mount of Olives. The Shekinah thus left altogether the temple and city: yet, in great grace, it lingered near.[a] (24) brought . . Chaldæa, *i.e.* back again to the banks of the Chebar.[b] (25) them . . captivity, *see* ch. viii. 1.

Departure of God from His temple (*v.* 23).—I. How averse God is to forsake His people. Look we to His declarations; look we to examples. II. What are the different steps by which His departure may be discovered? He withholds—1. The manifestations of His love; 2. The influences of His grace; 3. The warnings of His Spirit. III. The dreadful state of those who are forsaken by Him. 1. They are delivered up into the hands of their spiritual enemies; 2. They live only to increase their guilt and misery. Apply:—(1) How are we to reconcile this doctrine with other parts of Scripture (2) How are we to avert this awful calamity?[c]

Angels.—Their airy and gentle coming may well be compared to the glory of colours flung by the sun upon the morning clouds, that seem to be born just where they appear. Like a beam of light striking through some orifice, they shine upon Zacharias in the temple. As the morning light finds the flowers, so they found the mother of Jesus, and their message fell on her, pure as dewdrops on the lily. To the shepherd's eyes, they filled the midnight arch like auroral beams of light: but not as silently, for they sang more marvellously than when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. They communed with the Saviour in His glory of transfiguration, sustained Him in the anguish of the garden, watched Him at the tomb; and as they had thronged the earth at His coming, so they seem to have hovered in the air in multitudes at the hour of His ascension. Beautiful as they seem, they are never mere

a The Rabbis say that the glory lingered for three years over the Mount of Olives, but of this Scripture says nothing.

b "Not in actual fact, but in ecstatic vision. He had been as to the outward world all the time before the elders in Chaldæa; he now reports what he had witnessed with the inner eye."—*Fausset.*

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Six wings he wore, to shade his lineaments divine; the pair that clad each shoulder broad came mantling o'er his breast with regal ornament; the middle pair girt, like a starry zone, his waist, and round skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold and colours dipp'd in heaven; the third

poetical adornments. The occasions of their appearing are grand, the reasons weighty, and their demeanour suggests and befits the highest conception of superior beings. Their very coming and going is not with earthly movement. They are suddenly seen in the air, as one sees white clouds round out from the blue sky in a summer's day, that melt back even while one looks upon them. We could not imagine Christ's history without angelic lore. The sun without clouds of silver and gold, the morning on the fields without dew-diamonds, but not the Saviour without His angels. [d]

his feet shadow'd from either heel with feather'd mail, sky-tinctured grain."—*Milton.*

[d] *Beecher.*

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

1—7. (1, 2) dwellest, *i.e.* even now, in the captivity, such is the character of the people around you.[a] (3) stuff,[b] or household goods. By this act Ezekiel was to intimate that he might not stay with a people who gave so little heed to his counsels. (4) by day, so that all may see, take notice, and be warned by it. (5) dig, *etc.*, to illus. the escape of Zedekiah from Jerusalem.[c] (6) cover thy face, as the king did. (7) twilight, or dark. Through all this representing Zedek.'s escape as a warning to the people around him.

The Divine expectation (*v.* 3).—I. The subject to which this expectation refers. 1. Men do not consider that they are sinful creatures; 2. Nor that they are dying creatures; 3. Nor that they are immortal creatures. II. The means employed for bringing about the expectation which is here expressed. 1. The Divine forbearance; 2. The afflictive dispensations of Divine Providence; 3. The ministry of the Gospel.

Travelling—Baggage.—When they travel to distant places, they are wont to send off their baggage to some place of rendezvous some time before they set out. The account that an ingenious commentator, whose expositions are generally joined to Bishop Patrick's, gives of a paragraph of the Prophet Ezekiel, ought to be taken notice of here; it is, in a few words, this, "that the Prophet was to get the goods together, to pack them up openly, and at noonday, that all might see and take notice of it, that he was to get forth at even, as men do that would go off by stealth; that he was to dig through the wall, to show that Zedekiah should make his escape by the same means; that what the Prophet was commanded to carry out in the twilight, must be something different from the goods he removed in the daytime, and therefore must mean provision for his present subsistence; and that he was to cover his face, so as not to see the ground, as Zedekiah should do, that he might not be discovered." Sir John Chardin, on the contrary, supposes there was nothing unusual, nothing very particular, in the two first of the above-mentioned circumstances. His manuscript notes on this passage of Ezekiel are to the following purport: "This is as they do in the caravans: they carry out their baggage in the daytime, and the caravan loads in the evening, for in the morning it is too hot to set out on a journey for that day, and they cannot well see in the night. However, this depends on the length of their journeys: for when they are too short to take up a whole night, they load in the night, in order to arrive at their journey's end

[a] De. xxix. 4.

[b] Instruments of captivity: the needful equipments of an exile.

[c] 2 Ki. xxv. 4; Je. xxxix. 4.

v. 3. *S. Lavington*, 208.

"There are few things so exhilarating to the spirits, especially in the season of ardent and buoyant youth, as the first visit to a foreign land. Amongst things purely pleasurable, it is perhaps one of the most unalloyed gratifications which occur in the course of our life. But, like all other pleasures, it may be made, accordingly as we use it, a source of present vanity and future regret, or, on the other hand, of lasting and solid improvement. Our object should be, not to gratify curiosity, and seek mere temporary amusement, but to learn and to venerate,—to improve the heart and understanding."—*Gresley.*

early in the morning, it being a greater inconvenience to arrive at an unknown place in the night, than to set out on a journey then. As to his digging through the wall, he says Ezekiel is speaking, without doubt, of the walls of the caravansary. These walls, in the East, being mostly of earth, mud, or clay, they may easily be bored through." [d]

d Harmer.

8—12. (8, 9) house of Israel, those among whom Ezekiel dwelt. (10) burden, or prediction of woe.[a] prince, or King Zedekiah.[b] (11) your sign, *i.e.* a sign or warning to you of what shall surely come to pass. (12) bear, *etc.*, just as the Prophet had represented. Comp. the historical account.

Travelling—Baggage.—Ezekiel's collecting together his goods, does not look like a person's flying in a hurry, and by stealth; and consequently his going forth in the evening, in consequence of this preparation, cannot be construed as designed to signify a stealing away. These managements rather mark out the distance of the way they were going—going into captivity in a very far country. The going into captivity had not privacy attending it; and accordingly, the sending their goods to a common rendezvous beforehand, and setting out in an evening, are known to be Eastern usages. On the other hand, I should not imagine it was the wall of a caravansary, or any place like a caravansary, but the wall of the place where Ezekiel was, either of his own dwelling, or of the town in which he then resided; a management designed to mark out the flight of Zedekiah; as the two first circumstances were intended to shadow out the carrying Israel openly, and avowedly, into captivity. Ezekiel was, I apprehend, to do two things; to imitate the going of the people into captivity, and the hurrying flight of the king, two very distinct things. The mournful, but composed collecting together all they had for a transmigration, and leading them perhaps on asses, being as remote as could be from the hurrying and secret management of one making a private breach in a wall, and going off precipitately, with a few of his most valuable effects on his shoulder, which were, I should think, what Ezekiel was to carry, when he squeezed through the aperture in the wall, not provisions. Nor am I sure the Prophet's covering his face was designed for concealment: it might be to express Zedekiah's distress. David, it is certain, had his head covered when he fled from Absalom, at a time when he intended no concealment; and when Zedekiah fled, it was in the night, and consequently such a concealment not wanted; not to say, it would have been embarrassing to him in his flight not to be able to see the ground. The Prophet mentions the digging through the wall, after mentioning his preparation for removing as into captivity; but it is necessary for us to suppose these emblematical actions of the Prophet are ranged just as he performed them.[c]

a "Ezekiel, bearing his *stuff* on his shoulder, was a sign of the weight of calamity coming upon king and people." —*Spk. Com.*

b Eze. vii. 27.

"This is a traveller, sir, knows men and manners, and has plough'd up sea so far, till both the poles have knock'd; has seen the sun take coach, and can distinguish the colour of his horses, and their kinds."—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

"All travel has its advantages. If the passenger visits better countries, he may learn to improve his own; and if fortune carries him to worse, he may learn to enjoy his own."—*Johnson.*

c Harmer.

13—16. (13) my net, Zedekiah was caught in escaping by the Chaldæans, but the net was really God's. not see it, bec. his eyes were put out. (14) scatter, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxv. 4, 5. (15) know, by the fulfilment of the threatened Divine judgments. (16) a few men, ch. vi. 8—10.[a]

The hardness of the heart.—Stones are charged with the worst species of hardness—"As stubborn as a stone;" and yet the hardest stones submit to be smoothed and rounded under the soft

a 2 Ki. xxiv. 14, xxv. 12.

"O happy heart, where piety affecteth, where humility subjecteth, where repentance correcteth, where

You did not make yourself a heart of stone; neither can you make yourself "a heart of flesh;" both the one and the other are traceable to a power out of yourself.

friction of water. Ask the myriads of stones on the sea-shore, what has become of all their angles, once so sharp, and of the roughness and uncouthness of their whole appearance. Their simple reply is, "Water wrought with us, nothing but water, and none of us resisted." If they yield to be fashioned by the water, and you do not to be fashioned by God, what wonder if the very stones cry against you?[b]

17—20. (17) moreover, on another occasion, or with another message. (18) with quaking, *i.e.* with such signs of alarm as persons would feel in a time of siege; and with anxiety to limit the quantity of food to that barely necessary to sustain life.[a] (19) people of the land, *i.e.* the captives. They were to feel that the lot of their brethren in Jerusalem was far worse than their own. desolate . . therein, *i.e.* desolated of her people and her treasures. (20) cities, dependent on the fall of the chief city, Jerusalem.

Preparing food.—At Algiers they have public bakehouses for the people in common, so that the women only prepare the dough at home, it being the business of other persons to bake it. Boys are sent about the streets to give notice when they are ready to bake bread; "upon this the women within come and knock at the inside of the door, which the boy hearing makes towards the house. The women open the door a very little way, and, hiding their faces, deliver the cakes to him, which, when baked, he brings to the door again, and the women receive them in the same manner as they gave them." This is done almost every day, and they give the boy a piece, or little cake, for the baking, which the baker sells (Pitts). This illustrates the account of the false prophetesses receiving as gratuities pieces of bread: they are compensations still used in the East, but are compensations of the meanest kind, and for services of the lowest sort.[b]

21—25. (21, 22) days . . faileth, the point of the prov. is that the threatened judgment was so long in coming that the people need not fear its ever coming at all.[a] vision, *i.e.* prophetic vision. (23) at hand, close at hand. Very close when Ezekiel wrote. effect, or carrying out. (24) vain vision, one that will not be fulfilled. flattering divination, one that encourages the people to think they will yet be spared. Very soon the national calamities will silence the false diviners.[b] (25) in your days, before you die: in your time.

Death and eternity at hand (*v.* 23).—I. The tidings here announced to the Jews. Similar tidings to you, but you have disregarded them as the Jews of old: yet the days are at hand. II. The sign by which they were confirmed. Apply:—1. It may be that some of you will consider; 2. But the great mass of you will not.[c]

Nearness to the dead.—When the spirit of the living Christian draws nigh to the throne of grace, there is then between him and the spirits of the just made perfect a real nearness, the thought of which should be most consolatory to those whose friends have fallen asleep in Jesus. They are then breathing the same atmosphere of communion with Christ which those breathe who are with Him in paradise. The radii of a circle, in approaching a centre, cannot but, in the nature of things, draw near to one another; and two hearts, though separated by oceans

obedience dissecteth, where perseverance perfecteth, where power protecteth, where devotion projecteth, where charity connecteth."—*Quarles.*
b Pulsford.

a "A symbolical representation of the famine and fear with which they should eat their scanty morsel at the siege."—*Fausset.*

The Rev. James Hervey was once highly complimented by a person on account of his writings. "O sir," said that godly man, and at the same time laying his hand on his breast, "you would not strike the sparks of applause, if you knew how much corrupt tinder I have within."
b Harmer.

a Je. xvii. 15, xx. 7; Zep. i. 12; Is. v. 19; Am. vi. 18; 2 Pe. iii. 3, 4.

b "The false prophets who foretold peace and safety, shall see their prophecies so confuted by the events quite contrary to what they foretold, that they will never pretend any more to publish new prophecies."—*Lowth.*

tr. 21, 22. *J. W. Warter*, ii. 453.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

Notice in the seed the germ of the tree. Cut it open; study it under the microscope. Root, trunk, branches, leaves, are all

there. So in the Christian's heart is planted the germ of all that makes a son of God.
d Dr. Goulburn.

a "Not a mere repetition of the scoff (*v.* 22). There the scoffers asserted that the evil was so often threatened and postponed, it must have no reality; here formalists do not go so far as to deny that a day of evil is coming, but assert it as far off yet. The transition is easy from this carnal security to the gross infidelity of the former class." —*Fausset.*

vv. 23–28. *Adn. Wigram, Blooms. Lec.* viii. 248.

As soon may we count the rays of light, or atoms floating through the air, as number the vain imaginations that pass through the human heart.
b Elliot.

and mountains, yea, though separated by a greater gulf, which divides the seen from the unseen world, if both approach that great centre of attraction in the spiritual world, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," cannot but really and truly draw near to one another, though there may be no outward visible token of such nearness.[d]

26–28. (26, 27) many days, *i.e.* it belongs only to the far off future.[a] (28) prolonged, even Divine long-suffering now shall fail, and judgment come speedily.

Apostrophe to futurity.—

Ye rocks! ye elements! thou shoreless main,
In whose blue depths, worlds, ever voyaging,
Freighted with life and death, of fate complain.
Things of immutability! ye bring
Thoughts that with terror and with sorrow wring
The human breast. Unchanged, of sad decay
And deathless change ye speak, like prophets old,
Foretelling evil's ever-present day;
And as when horror lays his finger cold
Upon the heart in dreams, appal the bold.
O thou Futurity! our hope and dread,
Let me unveil thy features, fair or foul!
Thou who shalt see the grave untenanted,
And commune with the re-embodied soul!
Tell me thy secrets, ere thine ages roll
Their deeds, that yet shall be on earth, in heaven,
And in deep hell, where rabid hearts with pain
Must purge their plagues, and learn to be forgiven!
Show me the beauty that shall fear no stain,
And still through age-long years unchanged remain!
As one who dreads to raise the pallid sheet
Which shrouds the beautiful and tranquil face
That yet can smile, but never more shall meet,
With kisses warm, his ever fond embrace,
So I draw nigh to thee, with timid pace,
And tremble, though I long to lift thy veil.[b]

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1–5. (1, 2) prophesy . . hearts, *i.e.* of their own will, and not as delivering a Divine message.[a] (3) seen nothing, had no Divine vision given them.[b] "Seers of what they have not seen." (4) like the foxes, these creatures find their homes in desolate and ruined countries and cities; so the prophets find their profit in the ruin of their country.[c] (5) gaps, or breaches. The fig. is taken from stopping the way of an enemy when a breach in the walls has been made.[d] made . . hedge, or thrown up any works of defence.

Foxes.—When game fails him, or when the sword has ceased to supply his wants, the fox devours, with equal greediness, honey, fruits, and particularly grapes. In allusion to his eager desire for the fruit of the vine, it is said in the Song of Solomon, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." In Scripture, the Church is often compared

a Je. vi. 14, xxiii. 11, etc., xxvii. 14, xxix. 8, 22, 23; Mic. iii. 5.

b Comp. Is. i. 1, ii. 1.

c "In deserts the foxes become so ravenous and crafty in their devices to get food. So the prophets wander in Israel, a moral desert, unrestrained, greedy of gains which they get by craft."—*Fausset.*

to a vineyard; her members to the vines with which it is stored; and by consequence, the grapes may signify all the fruits of righteousness, which those mystical vines produce. The foxes that spoil these vines must therefore mean false teachers, who corrupt the purity of the doctrine, obscure the simplicity of worship, overturn the beauty of appointed order, break the unity of believers, and extinguish the life and vigour of Christian practice. These words of Ezekiel may be understood in the same sense: "O Jerusalem! thy prophets (or as the context clearly proves), thy flattering teachers, are as foxes in the deserts;" and this name they receive because, with vulpine subtlety, they speak lies in hypocrisy. Such teachers the Apostle calls "wolves in sheep's clothing," deceitful workers, who, by their cunning, subvert whole houses; and whose word, like the tooth of a fox upon the vine, eats as a canker.[e]—In this passage, Dr. Boothroyd, instead of foxes, translates "jackals," and I think it by far the best rendering. These animals are exceedingly numerous in the East, and are remarkably cunning and voracious. I suppose the reason why they are called the lion's provider is, because they yell so much when they have scent of prey, that the noble beast hearing the sound, goes to the spot and satisfies his hunger. They often hunt in packs, and I have had from twenty to thirty following me (taking care to conceal themselves in the low jungle) for an hour together. They will not, in general, dare to attack man: but let him be helpless or dead, and they have no hesitation. Thus our graveyards are often disturbed by these animals; and, after they have once tasted of human flesh, they (as well as many other creatures) are said to prefer it to any other. Their cunning is proverbial: thus, a man of plots and schemes is called a *nareyan*, *i.e.* a jackal. "Ah! only give that fellow a tail, and he will make a capital jackal." "Begone, low caste, or I will give thee to jackals."[f]

6—9. (6) **made to hope**, reference is rather to their own delusive hope that the event might confirm their word.[a] (7) **vain vision**, one that was a mere mental deception; an imagination of your own mind. (8) **am against you**, or I come against you to punish your wickedness. (9) **assembly**, *etc.*, here referring to the roll of the sacred people, as recognised by God. The Heb. word used (*sod*) means a privy council; and the Prophets may be spoken of as constituting God's privy council. **enter**, *etc.*, on the return of the people to their land.[b]

Foxes.—"The cunning of the fox caused it to be a fitting term of reproach for the false prophets: 'O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts' (Ezek. xiii. 4). Thus also our Lord rebuked the duplicity of Herod: 'Go ye, and tell that fox' (Luke xiii. 32). Its habit of burrowing, especially among rocks or ruins, is more than once alluded to: 'Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head' (Matt. viii. 20). 'If a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall' (Neh. iv. 3). And its resorting to desolate places: 'The mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it' (Lam. v. 18); though here the jackal is more especially indicated. So it is also in Psa. lxiii. 10: 'They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for *shû'allim*;' for the fox is not an habitual carrion feeder; while the jackals follow caravans, and attack graves for the carrion, which is their favourite dainty."

d "It was the office and duty of prophets, if they were truly what they pretended, by their prayers and intercessions to put a stop to God's vengeance when it was just ready to be poured out upon a sinful people." —*Lowth.*

"Reference is to *jackals*, which in desolate ruins are more hungry and rapacious than others."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 3. *H. Sydenham*, 224; *Bp. Wilberforce*, 306.

v. 4. *W. Reading*, iv. 129.

e Paxton.

f Roberts.

a "They come to believe their own lies. 'The Lord hath not sent them that they should hope,' *i.e.* so that they should have grounds to hope that their words will be confirmed." — *Spk. Com.*

b "They shall die in their captivity, and shall die childless, shall leave no posterity to take their denomination fr. them, and so their names shall not be found among those who either themselves or their posterity returned out of Babylon, of whom a particular account was kept in a public register." — *Mat. Henry.*

10–13. (10) saying, peace, Je. vi. 14. a wall, very slightly: as we would say, "run up a wall." untempered mortar, or slight coating of lime to make it look sound. Walls in the E. are often made of unbaked bricks, or rather masses of clay, smeared over with cement. This will not stand heavy rains.[a] (11) overflowing shower, *i.e.* one so heavy as to make an overflow. God's judgments are often compared to storms.[b] hailstones, Heb. *stones of ice.* (12) be said, your folly shall even pass into a popular proverb. (13) rend it, force it asunder so that it shall come down with an utter destruction.

Preaching (*v.* 10).—I. The charge brought against the preachers of the Gospel. 1. That they preach what is unreal; 2. What is unintelligible; 3. Allegorical. II. Some of the statements of the preachers of the Gospel on which this charge against them is founded. 1. Those which relate to the natural condition of mankind; 2. To the evidences of conversion; 3. To the happiness of religion; 4. To the future punishment of the finally impenitent.[c] —*Delusive confidence reproved* (*vv.* 10—12).—I. Who are obnoxious to this reproof? 1. Unfaithful ministers: 2. Unbelieving people. II. The warning here given to them. Their labour will end—1. In certain and bitter disappointment; 2. In irremediable and endless ruin. Address—(1) Careless sinners; (2) Self-complacent formalists; (3) Inconsistent professors.[d]

Bricks.—In countries destitute of coal, bricks are only either sun-dried, or very slightly burnt with bushes and branches of trees laid over them and set on fire. Such are ready to moulder if exposed to moisture, and entirely to melt away if exposed to heavy rain dashing against them. To prevent such a catastrophe, all the houses in the Cape colony are daubed or plastered over with fine mortar, made from ground seashells. Should only a small hole remain unnoticed in the plaster, powerful rain will get into it, and probably soon be the destruction of the whole building. Well do I remember one deluge of rain that turned a new house of three floors absolutely into a mass of rubbish, and brought down the gable of a parish church, besides injuring many other buildings.[e]

14—16. (14) ye . . consumed, fr. this expression it appears that the city of Jerusalem is figured by this wall which is about to be destroyed. (15) they . . daubed, *i.e.* the false prophets, who helped it to cherish a false security. (16) visions of peace, Je. vi. 10, viii. 11.

Cure for dull preaching.—Congregations sometimes mourn over dull preaching when themselves are to blame. Give your minister more beefsteak, and he will have more fire. Next to the Divine unction, the minister needs blood; and he cannot make that out of tough leather. One reason why the Apostles preached so powerfully was that they had healthy food. Fish was cheap, along Galilee, and this, with unbolted bread, gave them plenty of phosphorus for brain-food. These early ministers were never invited out to late suppers, with chicken salad and doughnuts. Nobody ever embroidered slippers for the big foot of Simon Peter, the fisherman preacher. Tea parties with hot waffles, at ten o'clock at night, make namby-pamby ministers; but good hours and substantial diet, that furnishes nitrates for the muscle, and phosphates for the brain, and carbonates for the whole frame, prepare a man for effective work. When the water is low the

a "In a Median village the men were building a wall of beaten earth rammed into moulds or boxes, to give the parts the requisite shape and consistence, and so deposited, by the withdrawal of the mould, layer by layer, upon the wall, each layer drying in its place as the work proceeds. The blocks are usually of considerable size, and are of various quality and strength, as well as cost, according to the materials employed, and the time expended upon them. Unless the climate be very dry, such a wall requires to be faced or coated with a tempered mortar of lime or sand, as a fence against the weather."—*Kitto.*
b Job xxvii. 20; Ps. xi. 6, xviii. 13, 14; Eze. xxxviii. 22.
c G. Brooks
d C. Simeon, M.A.
e Campbell.

"A divine ought to calculate his sermon, as an astronomer does his almanac, to the meridian of the place and people where he lives."—*Palmer.*

"As a thistle, if stroked upward, will not molest a man, but, if stroked downward, will prick him: so many hearers of the word, so long as the minister preaches pleasant things, are pleased with him; but so soon as he rubs them

mill-wheel goes slow; but a full race, and how fast the grist is ground. In a man the arteries are the mill-race, and the brain the wheel; and the practical work of life is the grist ground. The reason our soldiers failed in some of the battles was because their stomachs had for several days been innocent of everything but "hard-tack." See that your minister has a full haversack. Feed him on gruel during the week, and on Sunday he will give you gruel. Eight hundred or a thousand dollars for a minister is only a slow way of killing him, and is the worst style of homicide. Why do not the trustees and elders take a mallet or an axe, and with one blow put him out of his misery?[a]

17—19. (17) **daughters**, some women prophets are noticed in Scripture:[a] this encouraged others of the same sex to pretend to the same gift. (18) **sew . . armholes**, or elbows. By fixing pillows on the elbows, these women designed to indicate the assurance of perfect restfulness and tranquillity.[b] **kerchiefs . . stature**, magical veils put on the heads of those who consulted these false prophetesses. **will ye save**, nay rather, how surely you will deceive and destroy all you gain. (19) **for handfuls**, *etc.*, *i.e.* for mere gain putting the name of God to dishonour. For even the meanest and most trifling rewards.

Carpets.—In Barbary and the Levant they "always cover the floors of their houses with carpets; and along the sides of the wall or floor, a range of narrow beds or mattresses is often placed upon these carpets; and, for their further ease and convenience, several velvet or damask bolsters are placed upon these carpets or mattresses, indulgences that seem to be alluded to by the stretching of themselves upon couches, and by the sewing of pillows to armholes" (Shaw). But Lady M.W. Montagu's description of a Turkish lady's apartment throws still more light on this passage. She says: "The rooms are all spread with Persian carpets, and raised at one end of them about two feet. This is the sofa, which is laid with a richer sort of carpet, and all round it a sort of couch, raised half a foot, covered with rich silk, according to the fancy or magnificence of the owner. Round about this are placed, standing against the walls, two rows of cushions, the first very large, and the rest little ones. The seats are so convenient and easy, that I believe I shall never endure chairs again as long as I live." And in another place she thus describes the fair Fatima: "On a sofa raised three steps, and covered with fine Persian carpets, sat the kahya's lady, leaning on cushions of white satin, embroidered. She ordered cushions to be given me, and took care to place me in the corner, which is the place of honour."[c]

20—23. (20) **make them fly**,[a] or run into your nets and snares. Margin has, "into your gardens or groves." **tear . . arms**, and expose your deceptions. (21) **kerchiefs**, *v.* 18. (22) **lies**, false representations, leading the righteous to mistrust the Word of God,[b] and deluding the sinners with vain hopes. **hands . . wicked**, by wh. his evil works were wrought. (23) **see no more vanity**, bec. the fulfilment of Divine threatenings, and your own destruction, are close at hand.

Pillows and armholes.—The margin has, instead of "armholes," "elbows." The marginal reading is undoubtedly the best. Rich people have a great variety of pillows and bolsters

a little on the gall, and touches them home to the quick, then they kick and storm at the same."—*Cawdray.*

a *De Witt Talmage.*

a Ex. xv. 20; Ju. iv. 4; 2 Ki. xxii. 14; comp. Joel ii. 28.

b "Or the idea may be, Woe to the women who muffle up the joints of My hands, when I stretch them out in retribution, and who endeavour to hide My arms which I make bare to punish My people."—*Wordsworth.*

"An old Scotch preacher is reported to have said in one of his sermons at Aberdeen—'Ye people of Aberdeen get your fashions from Glasgow, and Glasgow from Edinburgh, and Edinburgh from London, and London from Paris, and Paris from the devil.'"—*John Bate.*

c *Burder.*

a "*Fly* is peculiarly appropriate as to those lofty spiritual *flights*, to which they pretended to raise their dupes when they veiled their heads with kerchiefs, and made them rest on luxurious arm-cushions."—*Fausset.*

b "Disheartened

the righteous with groundless fears."—*Lowth.* Reference may be intended to the Prophet Jeremiah, as the man disheartened by the male and female false prophets.
c Roberts.

to support themselves in various positions when they wish to take their ease. Some are long and round, and are stuffed till they are quite hard, whilst others are short and soft, to suit the convenience. The verse refers to females of a loose character, and Parkhurst is right when he says, "These false prophetesses decoyed men into their gardens, where probably some impure rites of worship were performed." The pillows were used for the vilest purposes, and the kerchiefs were used as an affectation of shame.[c]

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

1—5. (1) elders, *comp.* ch. viii. 1. These were fellow-exiles with Ezekiel, who was at this time fully recognised as a prophet of Jehovah.[a] (2, 3) idols . . heart, the idol of the heart is self-will.[b] stumblingblock, *etc.*, comp. ch. vii. 19. (4) will answer him, or as we say in sarcasm, "He shall have his answer." according . . idols, *i.e.* an answer as delusive as the idols he serves. A reply adjusted not to his inquiry but to his evil practices.[c] (5) take, as in a snare; their own evil heart being the snare and pitfall in which they are caught.

The idols in the heart a barrier to the truth (*vv.* 2, 3).—I. The idols that are in the heart, and the stumbling-blocks that are before the face, are the sins with which God's people are sometimes chargeable. II. Men professing to inquire after God while their idols are in their hearts, and their stumbling-blocks before their faces; or the gross inconsistency of seeking to mingle the service of God with the pursuit of sin. 1. Men may pray from the influence of custom; 2. From the promptings of conscience; 3. From the desire to stand well with their fellow-men; 4. From a vain desire to set themselves right with God. III. God taking notice of the idols that are in men's hearts, and the stumbling-blocks that are before their faces, or the faithful warnings which God addresses to those who follow sin while they profess to serve Him. 1. He intimates that He is perfectly acquainted with us; 2. He tells us that He cannot answer the requests of those who indulge in sin; 3. He shows us how unreasonable it is to expect that He will be inquired of by us.

Darkness of heathenism.—A Hindoo of a thoughtful, reflecting turn of mind, but devoted to idolatry, lay on his death-bed. As he saw himself about to plunge into that boundless unknown, he cried out, "What will become of me?" "Oh," said a Brahmin, who stood by, "you will inhabit another body." "And where," said he, "shall I go then?" "Into another." "And where then?" "Into another; and so on, through thousands of millions." Darting across this whole period, as though it were but an instant, he cried, "Where shall I go then?" Paganism could not answer; and he died, agonising under the inquiry, "Where shall I go last of all?"

6—8. (6) repent and turn, the word *repent* deals with the right *feeling*; the word *turn* deals with the corresponding *action* in ordering life and conduct. (7) stranger, *comp.* Le. xvii. 10, xx. 2. by myself, not by the agency of a prophet, but by a direct visitation of judgment."[a] sign, *etc.*, De. xxviii 37.

a "They look for encouragement and comfort. But Ezekiel, with the genuine prophetic spirit, sees deep into their hearts, and finds them at variance with devotion to the true God. The idols of self-will and unsubmissiveness are set up therein. The Prophet warns them that God will not be inquired of in such a spirit as this."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Lit. 'They have made their idols to go up upon their hearts, as if their hearts were an altar and throne for idols.'"—*Wordsworth.*

c "Turn thee fr. these, or dare not to inquire of Him whose name is Jealous, lest in wrath He hear and answer thine unblest desire: far better we should cross His lightning's path than be according to our idols heard, and God should take us at our own vain word."—*Keble.*

a "I will punish him immediately by My own hands. See *v.* 8."—*Lowth.*

v. 7. *W. Reading*, ii. 506.

Infanticide.—When a missionary, in South America, was reproving a married woman, of reputed good character, for following the custom of destroying female infants, she answered with tears, "I wish earnestly, father, I wish that my mother had, by my death, prevented the distresses I endure, and have yet to endure, as long as I live. Consider, father, our deplorable condition. Our husbands go to hunt, and trouble themselves no further. We are dragged along, with one infant at the breast and another in a basket. They return in the evening without any burden; we return with the burden of our children; and, though tired with a long march, are not permitted to sleep, but must labour the whole night in grinding maize to make chica for them. They get drunk, and, in their drunkenness, beat us, draw us by the hair of the head, and tread us under foot. And what have we to comfort us for slavery that has no end? A young wife is brought in upon us, who is permitted to abuse us and our children, because we are no longer regarded. Can human nature endure such tyranny? What kindness can we show to our female children equal to that of relieving them from such oppression, more bitter a thousand times than death? I say again, would to God that my mother had put me under ground the moment I was born!" [b]

9—11. (9) I . . deceived, *i.e.* suffered him to be deceived,[a] but both he and those who are deceived by his false prophecies will alike come into the Divine judgment. (10) bear . . iniquity, both of their idolatry and their hypocrisy in seeking Jehovah when they loved their idols. (11) go . . astray, this was the Divine purpose in inflicting the punishments. For the Divine love works through the Divine judgments.[b]

Delusion and illusion.—We distinguish between illusion and delusion. We may paint wood so as to be taken for stone, iron, or marble; this is delusion: but you may paint a picture in which rocks, trees, and sky are never mistaken for what they seem, yet produce all the emotion which real rocks, trees, and sky would produce. This is illusion, and this is the painter's art: never for one moment to deceive by attempted imitation, but to produce a mental state in which the feelings are suggested which the natural objects themselves would create. Let us take an instance drawn from life. To a child the rainbow is a real thing—substantial and palpable; its limb rests on the side of yonder hill; he believes that he can appropriate it to himself; and when, instead of gems and gold, hid in its radiant bow, he finds nothing but damp mist—cold, dreary drops of disappointment,—that disappointment tells that his belief has been delusion. To the educated man that bow is a blessed illusion, yet it never once deceives; he does not take it for what it is not, he does not expect to make it his own; he feels its beauty as much as the child could feel it, nay, infinitely more—more even from the fact that he knows that it will be transient; but besides and beyond this, to him it presents a deeper loveliness: he knows the laws of light and the laws of the human soul which gave it being. He has linked it with the laws of the universe, and with the invisible mind of God: and it brings to him a thrill of awe, and a sense of a mysterious, nameless beauty, of which the child did not conceive. It is illusion still, but it has fulfilled the promise.[c]

v. 8. *H. Alford,* ii. 120.

"Travellers tell us that there is a tribe in Africa so given to superstition, that they fill their huts and hovels with so many idols, that they do not even leave room for their families. How many men there are who fill their hearts with the idols of sin, so that there is no room for the living God, or for any of His holy principles!" —*Bate.*

b R. T. S.

a "Not merely permissively, but but by overruling their evil to serve the purposes of His righteous judgment, to be a touchstone to separate the precious from the vile, and to 'prove His people.'"—*Fausset.*

De. xiii. 1—3; 1 Ki. xxii. 23; Je. iv. 10; 2 Th. ii. 11, 12.

b "God punishes sins by means of sins."

"The judgments I inflict on the false prophets, and those that consult them, shall be an instruction to My people to keep close to Me and My worship."—*Lowth.*

v. 9. *J. Puckle,* ii. 277.

c F. W. Robertson.

12–14. (12, 13) the land, better, a land, any land. grievously, in a way that compels Divine interference. staff, *etc.*, ch. iv. 16, v. 16. (14) three men, *comp.* Ge. xv. 1. Noah, Daniel, and Job, three men eminent in righteousness and holiness, who lived in evil days.[a] Obs. the indication that in Ezekiel's time Daniel was known and honoured among the exiles. Daniel was then about thirty years old.

Evils of insufficiency of food.—The benefits which accrue to the body from supplying it with a sufficiency of wholesome food, show in the strongest light the evils which result from insufficiency. Disease is one of the first. Many diseases are induced by it, many are aggravated. Sanitary movements having reference to the poor cannot possibly effect any lasting amelioration of their condition so long as they go short of proper aliment. It is worthy the attention of philanthropists that epidemic and pestilential diseases in particular are far more widely fatal in their ravages among the ill-fed than among the well-fed. Certainly there are several such diseases which assail rich and poor alike—as measles, small-pox, and scarlet fever; but even these are much more destructive when they attack persons who have been forced to subsist on poor or too scanty nourishment. Legislators, no less than the charitable, may find in this fact a vitally important principle of action. Insufficiency over-prolonged, induces the slow and miserable death of starvation: and no physical calamity can be conceived of as more terrible. Yet starvation—actual, killing starvation—is perhaps the least part of the injury to the human race which comes of privation of needful sustenance. Actual death from hunger is only an occasional thing; the evils which accrue from the debilitating effects of customary stint, life still dragging on, are incalculably more extended and severe. Even the physical disease which they engender is a slight evil compared with the impeded mental action which must needs follow. A miserable, starving dietary, while it weakens the body, half paralyses the soul, and not seldom leads direct to insanity itself. When we remember how entirely the brain depends for its nourishment upon the blood, and that if this pabulum of life and nervous energy be either diminished in quantity or deteriorated in quality, no organ of the body can possibly work well, how easy it is to see that between insufficient, innutritious diet, and prostration of mind, there is little less than an inevitable connection. Every man has experienced the feeling of debility which attends hunger but a little longer unsatisfied than usual, and how swift and lively is the revival of every function of the mind as well as body which follows its proper gratification.[b]

15–18. (15) noisome beasts, *comp.* Le. xxvi. 6. Prob. enemies are intended by this fig. of beasts. (16) deliver . . daughters, *i.e.* their intercessions should be unavailing, bec. the iniquity would be such as necessitated Divine visitation.[a] (17) sword, ch. xxi. 4, xxxviii. 21. (18) though, *etc.*, comp. *v.* 16.

The tiger.—A party of gentlemen from Bombay, one day visiting the stupendous cavern temple of Elephanta, discovered a tiger's whelp in one of the obscure recesses of the edifice. Desirous of kidnapping the cub without encountering the fury of its dam, they took it up hastily and cautiously, and retreated.

[a] "Signal objects of Divine favour on account of their righteousness. Noah, in being allowed to be an instrument in saving the human race from the flood, in the ark; Job, in having his estate doubled after his affliction; Daniel, in seeing the captivity, and foreseeing the return and coming of Christ."—*Origen.*

"They signally prevailed in *saving others*. Noah, in saving the human family; Daniel, in saving the Chaldæan astrologers from destruction (Da. ii. 24); Job, in interceding for his friends (Job xlii. 8–10)."—*Wordsworth.*

vv. 12, 13. *J. Abernethy*, ii. 328.

vv. 12–14. *Ib. Goodwin*, iii. 33.

vv. 13, 14. *Origen, Op.* iii. 369.

"There is many a wounded heart without a contrite spirit. The ice may be broken into a thousand pieces, it is ice still; but expose it to the beams of the Sun of Righteousness and then it will melt."—*Middleton.*

[b] *Grindon.*

[a] There may be times when the very Divine love must refuse to hear intercessors.

"Were there in it the most perfect of all men that have been, or are still living, they should avail nothing towards interceding for a land already

Being left entirely at liberty, and extremely well fed, the tiger grew rapidly, appeared tame and fondling as a dog, and in every respect entirely domesticated. At length, when having attained a vast size, and notwithstanding its apparent gentleness, it began to inspire terror by its tremendous powers of doing mischief, it fell in with a piece of raw meat dripping with blood. It is to be observed, that up to that moment it had been studiously kept from raw animal food. The instant, however, it had dipped its tongue in blood, something like madness seemed to have seized the animal; a destructive principle, hitherto dormant, was awakened; it darted fiercely, and with glaring eyes, upon its prey, tore it with fury to pieces, and, growling and roaring in the most fearful manner, rushed off towards the jungles. How forcibly descriptive is this propensity of the tiger of the evil inclinations of the human heart! In various situations in which we may be placed, they appear to have no power; but let only the opportunity occur, and the temptation approach, and the unhallowed heart of man rushes forward as recklessly and as impetuously after evil as the tiger after his prey. The grace of God alone, can control the unruly wills and affections of sinful men. Sin may be repressed and hidden, but it cannot be destroyed within us, until Divine grace reigns triumphant in our hearts.[b]

19—23. (19) pour . . blood, *i.e.* with great destruction of men's lives, by the pestilence. In Heb. *blood* expresses any premature kind of death. (20) own souls, or own lives. (21) upon Jerusalem, the former references had been general, now the principle of Divine dealing is applied to the city of privilege, Jerusalem, whose iniquity was more hateful by reason of its superior position and privilege. (22) comforted, by seeing how even Divine judgments work out for good.[a] (23) without cause, *i.e.* without sufficient cause; or without a definite and gracious purpose.

God's peace.—The child frightened in his play runs to seek his mother. She takes him upon her lap, and presses his head to her bosom; and, with tenderest words of love, she looks down upon him, and smooths his hair, and kisses his cheek, and wipes away his tears. And then, in a low and gentle voice, she sings some sweet descant, some lullaby of love; and the fear fades out from his face, and a smile of satisfaction plays over it, and at length his eyes close, and he sleeps in the deep depths and delights of peace. God Almighty is the mother, and the soul is the tired child; and He folds it in His arms, and dispels its fear, and lulls it to repose, saying, "Sleep, My darling, sleep! It is I who watch thee." "He giveth His beloved sleep." The mother's arms encircle but one; but God clasps every yearning soul to His bosom, and gives to it the peace which passeth understanding, beyond the reach of care or storm.[b]

doomed to destruction."—*Calvin.*

"As to a valiant soldier, nothing is more noble, and worthy of praise, than to carry the armour and arms of his prince; so a true Christian esteemeth nothing of greater value, and more honourable, than to bear the arms and badges of Christ, that is, crosses and afflictions."—*Cawdray.*

b Visitor.

a "This will compose your minds, and make you give glory to God and acknowledge His judgments to be righteous, though they touch you very nearly in the destruction of your friends and country."—*Lowth.*

When afflictions have done their work, and have accomplished that for which they were sent, then will appear the wisdom and goodness of God in sending them, and God will not only be justified but glorified in them." — *Mat. Henry.*

b Beecher.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

1—5. (1, 2) vine . . tree, the vine is a symbol of the Jewish Church.[a] The reference here is to the *wood* of the tree, wh. is useless for firewood, and to the carpenter.[b] branch, an ordinary branch of any tree. (3) pin, or peg. These were driven into walls of houses for domestic uses. (4) for fuel, sometimes the vine-branches are burned for charcoal, but they do not give

a Is. v. 1; Ps. lxxx. 8.

b "The branches of the vine are pruned every spring, being cut close to the stem,

and, when not needed to thatch the top of the earth-wall, are burned to put them out of the way, as they are too porous and light to serve any purpose." — *Van Lennep.*

"In this passage the Prophet gives us a fig. representation of man, considered especially as the object of Divine care and culture. He is naturally capable of yielding a precious fruit; in this consists his sole excellency; this is the sole end of his existence, and if he fails in this, he is of no use but to be destroyed."- *Robert Hall.*

c Dr. Thomas.

d Spenser.

"And in the thickest covert of that shade, there was a pleasant arbour, not by art, but of the trees' owne meli-nation made, which knitting their raneke braunches part to part, with wanton yvie twine entrayl'd athwart, and eglantine and caprifole among, fashion'd above within their inmost part, that neither Phœbus' beams could through them throng, nor Æolus' sharp blast could worke them any wrong."-*Spenser.*

e Hurdis.

out heat enough for cooking purposes, and vine-wood charcoal is chiefly used in the houses of the wealthy to heat the *tandoor*, or warming apparatus. (5) is burned, as Jerusalem was in the prophetic vision.

The parabolic picture of Israel (*vv.* 1—8).—We infer—I. That God has placed some sections of the human family under special culture. 1. This was the case with the Jews; 2. With Christendom; 3. With Great Britain. II. That such sections are, whether fruitful or unfruitful, widely distinguished from all others. 1. If fruitful, they are distinguished for valuableness; 2. If unfruitful, they are distinguished by worthlessness. III. That such distinction is recognised and retributed by God.[c]

Trees characterised.—

The sailing Pine; the Cedar, proud and tall;
The vine-prop Elm; the Poplar, never dry;
The builder Oak: sole king of forests all;
The Aspen, good for staves; the Cypress, funeral;
The Laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets sage; the Fir that weepeth still;
The Willow, worn of hopeless paramours;
The Yew, obedient to the bender's will;
The Birch for shafts; the Sallow for the mill;
The Myrrh, sweet bleeding in the bitter wound;
The warlike Beech; the Ash, for nothing ill;
The fruitful Olive, and the Platane round;
The carver Holm; the Maple, seldom inward sound.[d]

6—8. (6) will I give, as useless, and only fit for the burning. (7) one fire, *i.e.* one form of the Divine judgment. (8) trespass, or "they have perversely fallen into perverse rebellion."

Trees: their growth and age.—

Than a tree, a grander child earth bears not.
What are the boasted palaces of man,
Imperial city, or triumphal arch,
To forests of immeasurable extent.
Which time confirms, which centuries waste not?
Oaks gather strength for ages, and when at last
They wane, so beauteous in decrepitude—
So grand in weakness, e'en in their decay
So venerable—'twere sacrilege t' escape
The consecrating touch of time. Time watch'd
The blossom on the parent bough; Time saw
The acorn loosen from the spray; Time pass'd
While springing from its swaddling shell yon oak,
The cloud-crown'd monarch of our woods, by thorns
Environ'd, 'scaped the raven's bill, the tooth
Of goat and deer, the schoolboy's knife, and sprang
A royal hero from his nurse's arms.
Time gave it seasons, and Time gave it years,
Ages bestow'd, and centuries grudged not;
Time knew the sapling when gay summer's breath
Shook to the roots the infant oak, which after
Tempests moved not. Time hollow'd in its trunk
A tomb for centuries, and buried there
The epochs of the rise and fall of states,
The fading generations of the world,
The memory of men.[e]

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

1—5. (1, 2) abominations, to understand and feel the grievous sin of her idolatries. (3) birth, lit. *thy cutting out.*[a] of . . Canaan, *i.e.* it would seem, by your manners, as if you had been born in Canaan, as if your "father had been an Amorite and your mother a Hittite."[b] (4) salted . . swaddled, references to the E. mode of treating new-born infants.[c] The *v.* describes an utterly neglected infant.[d] (5) lothing . . person, or the contempt of thy life; or with reference to the unsightly appearance of such an exposed infant.

A charge to city ministers (*v.* 2).—The charge here given to Ezekiel applies to all city ministers. I. Ezekiel had a commission to a corrupt city. II. His commission was to reveal the city to itself. 1. Because the moral corruptions of a city expose the population to terrible calamities; 2. Because the city itself is ignorant of its moral corruption; 3. Because such revelation may lead to moral reformation; 4. Because unless you make this revelation no one else can be expected to do so.[e]

Salting the new-born.—It was an ancient custom to salt the bodies of new-born infants. It is probable that they only sprinkled them with salt, or washed them with salt-water, which they imagined would dry up all superfluous humours. Galen says, "*Sale modico insperso, cutis infantis densior, solidiorque redditur;*" that is, a little salt being sprinkled upon the infant, its skin is rendered more dense and solid. It is said that the inhabitants of Tartary still continue the practice of salting their children as soon as they are born.[f]

6—9. (6) polluted, *etc.*, still regarding Israel as an untended infant. live, *i.e.* when so utterly uncared for. I took thee up, and saved thy life. (7) caused . . field, or "I made thee ten thousand, as the sprouting of the field."[a] come . . ornaments, fig. for "thou becamest most beautiful." naked . . bare, *i.e.* nakedness and bareness itself. God presided over all the growth of the naked infant into the beautiful woman. (8) spread . . thee,[b] symbol of taking a woman under a man's protection. (9) oil, the symbol of health and rejoicing.

The life of souls the ordinance of God (*v.* 6).—I. Servants of God, what then is our office? II. There are souls dead. 1. Men are ignorant of the nature of their souls; 2. The souls of men are not fulfilling the end of their being; 3. The souls of men are strangers to the peculiar joys of their being. III. Therefore, as the servants of God, the cry of our ministry is, Live.[c]

Advice to one seeking salvation.—"A person whom I once knew was roused from a habit of indolence and supineness to a serious concern for his eternal welfare. Convinced of his depraved nature and aggravated guilt, he had recourse to the Scriptures and to frequent prayer; he attended the ordinances of Christianity, and sought earnestly for an interest in Christ, but found no steadfast faith, and tasted very little comfort; at length he applied to an eminent divine, and laid open the state of his heart. Short but weighty was the answer: 'I perceive, sir, the cause of all your distress; you will not come to Christ as a sinner; this mistake lies between you and the joy of religion; this detains

a Comp. Is. li. 1.
b "Those are said to be our parents in the Scrip. dialect, whose manners we resemble. Mat. iii. 7; Jno. viii. 44."—*Lowth.*
c "In the East at the present day, as soon as a babe is born it is washed in salted water, clothed, and swathed in a long bandage or swaddling cloth, three or four inches wide, and about ten feet long, which is firmly wound around it from the neck downward, including the arms, which are thus pinioned to its sides, so that it can stir neither hand or foot."—*Van Lennep.*
d Ho. ii. 3. *v.* 2. *P. Henry*, 209.
e Dr. Thomas.
f Burder.

a Ex. i. 7.
b "'I have been delighted at the marriage ceremonies of the Hindoos, to see amongst them the same interesting custom. The bride is seated on a throne, surrounded by matrons, wearing her veil, her gayest robes, and most valuable jewels. After the *thali* has been tied round her neck, the bridegroom approaches her with a silken skirt (purchased by himself), and folds it round her several times over the rest of her clothes. This part of the ceremony often pro-

duces powerful emotions on all present.'" — *Roberts.*
c J. Pulsford.
d Hervey.

a Van Lennep.
b Oriental women are notoriously fond of decking with jewellery, not only their heads, but other parts of their body as well. Comp. Ge. xxiv. 22, 47. It is often a large ring, ornamented with emeralds, pearls, or both. To the European taste it looks very disfiguring; and when of expensive materials is so tempting to thieves, that, as we have somewhere read, their last act when escaping from a house they have plundered is often to twitch the ring out of the nose of some sleeping female, and then before she has had time to recover from the fright and pain, vanish amid the darkness of the night.

v. 10. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badger's skin, and girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. See on Ex. xxv. 5.
vv. 18, 19. And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them. My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee,

you in the gall of bitterness, and take heed, O take heed, lest it consign you to the bond of iniquity.' This admonition never departed from the gentleman's mind, and it became the means of removing the obstacles of his peace."*d*

10—14. (10) badger's skins, Ex. xxv. 5. silk, Heb. *meshi*, the derivation of wh. is disputed. "Silk was used for clothing first in the North of China, thence it came to Syria and Egypt by way of India."*a* (11) ornaments, wh. were highly prized by brides. (12) jewel .. forehead, in Is. iii. 21, the word is *nose-jewel*.*b* (13) fine flour, *etc.*, signs of delicate provision and treatment. into a kingdom, as in the reigns of David and Solomon. (14) perfect, *comp.* ch. xxvii. 3, 4. comeliness, a suitable and suggestive word for a beautiful and adorned bride. But all her grace must be traced to the provision and the care of God.

Ornaments for the nose.—The nose jewel is a singular ornament, peculiar to the East, which the Jewish females wear, and of which the Asiatic ladies are extremely fond. This ornament was one of the presents which the servant of Abraham gave to Rebekah, in the name of his master: "I put," said he, "the earring upon her face," more literally, I put the ring on her nose. They wore ear-rings besides; for the household of Jacob, at his request, when they were preparing to go up to Bethel, gave him all the ear-rings which were in their ears, and he hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. The difference between theso ornaments is clearly stated by the Prophet: "I put a jewel on thy nose and ear-rings in her ears." The nose jewel, therefore, was different from the ear-ring, and actually worn by the females as an ornament in the East. This is confirmed by the testimony of Sir John Chardin, who says, "It is the custom in almost all the East for the women to wear rings in their noses, in the nostril, which is bored low down in the middle. These rings are of gold, and have commonly two pearls and one ruby between them, placed in the ring: I never saw a girl or young woman in Arabia, or in all Persia, who did not wear a ring after this manner in her nostril."

15—19. (15) trust, *etc.*, didst think too much of thyself, and so fell into temptation. harlot, idolatry is often described by the Prophets as adultery. (16) deckedst, *etc.*, with reference to the efforts of the lewd woman to make herself attractive. like things, *etc.*, *i.e.* there shall never anything happen again so revolting and so dreadful. (17) images, *i.e.* idol-images. (18) garments, wh. I had given thee as my bride. (19) sweet savour, or incense offered to idols of the good things I gave thee.

Heathen idolatry.—The Hindoos, in one portion of their idolatrous worship, observe the following rites. The image is first anointed with gingelly "oil," which is afterwards washed off with lime-juice and pure water. A composition made of the following articles is then poured upon it:—Water of the unripe cocoa-nut, rose-water, milk, plantains, "honey," rice, "flour," sugar, sandal-dust, powder of the bezoar stone, nutmeg, saffron, and camphor. Then the whole is washed off with the water of unripe cocoa-nuts. At the offering of the "incense," cakes are presented, made of native species of chickpeas, rice, sesame,

millet, peas, beans, and mustard. The "broidered garment" mentioned by the Prophet, which is generally made of silk, (though I have seen one of cotton), is then reverently drawn over the image. Who can avoid being struck with these resemblances! Who can avoid being appalled at the wickedness of the Jews? See the observations on 2 Chron. xiv. 5.

20—24. (20, 21) pass . . fire, to Moloch, Je. xxxii. 35. (22) remembered, or thought on. naked, *etc.* (*v.* 7, etc.). (23, 24) eminent place, meaning a house in which to carry on thy wicked idolatries; a heathen temple.

Ancient idolatry in Britain.—In the writings of the Rev. T. Maurice, on *Indian Antiquities*, when referring to the worship practised by the British Druids, he remarks:—"The pen of history trembles to relate the baleful orgies which their frantic superstition celebrated, when, enclosing men, women, and children in one vast wicker image, in the form of a man, and filling it with every kind of combustibles, they set fire to the huge colossus. While the dreadful holocaust was offering to their sanguinary gods, the groans and shrieks of the consuming victims were drowned amidst shouts of barbarous triumph, and the air was rent, as in the Syrian temple of old, with martial music! Religion shudders at such a perversion of its name and rites, and humanity turns with horror from the guilty scene."[a]

25—29. (25) built, *etc.*, allusion is made in this *v.* to the rude manners of such lewd women. (26) Egyptians, by depending on them rather than on God, thy true Husband. (27) stretched, *etc.*, in severe dealings; abridging thee of necessaries and conveniences. daughters, or cities. References may be intended to the calamitous times of the Judges. (28) Assyrians, in depending, as a nation, on their help. (29) land of Canaan, here prob. intended to include the Phœnician border and Syrian districts.

Lewd.—"Lewd way," Ezek. xvi. 27. as the modern usage, but Acts xvii. 5, "certain lewd (*i.e.* common) fellows of the baser sort." Anglo-Saxon, *Leód* "people." In early English, *lede* (German, *leute*). Similarly the adjective "vulgar" has not always been used in an obnoxious sense, as in "vulgar tongue," *i.e.*, tongue of the people, and the Vulgate Version is that universally adopted by the Romish communion. Latimer, Sermon IV. "Conv. of the Clergy," speaks of the "lewd servant hiding his master's money in the ground," where it seems to mean "vile." Hudibras calls bear-baiting a "lewd, anti-Christian game" (i. 802-3). Katherine's cap is called by the mad Petruchio "lewd," *i.e.* common.—*Taming of the Shrew*, Act iv. Sc. 3. "Lewd men (referring to Esau) when they think they have earned of God, and come proudly to challenge favour, receive no answer but 'Who art thou?'"[a]

30—34. (30) weak, or wasted. Sin ever weakens both intellect and heart. (31) eminent place, *v.* 24. (32) wife, adultery being a much deeper sin than fornication, because it involves *unfaithfulness*. (33) hirest, or bribest. (34) contrary, manifesting stronger wilfulness, and more shameless wickedness.

Prevention of licentiousness.—"Why did you not take the arm of my brother last night?" said one young lady to another. thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord God.

The Rev. Mr. Richards, an American missionary, relates that in 1832 a Hindoo was seen to throw his living child into the river, as a sacrifice to the Gunga, having first violently forced it from the arms of its weeping mother. The man was apprehended, and, on his examination, pointed out the Brahmin who directed him to do this awful act, to atone for his sins!

a Whitecross.

"A just and reasonable modesty does not only recommend eloquence, but sets off every great talent which a man can be possessed of. It heightens all the virtues which it accompanies. Like the shades in paintings, it raises and rounds every figure, and makes the colours more beautiful, though not so glaring as they would be without."—*Addison.*

a Hall, B. iii. Cont. i.

v. 30. *Dr. H. Hammond*, iv. 567.

vv. 30—33. *Origen, Op.* iii. 376.

The life, opportunities, and seeming enjoyments of Colonel Gardner, were such as to secure him the name of "The Happy Rake." While being congratulated by his com-

panions, one day, he could not forbear groaning, and saying, as a dog entered the room, "Oh that I were that dog!"

"Because I know him to be a licentious young man," was the answer. "Nonsense!" said the sister: "if you refuse the attentions of all licentious men, you will have none, I can assure you." "Very well," was the reply, "then I can dispense with them altogether; my resolution on this point is unalterably fixed."

35—39. (35, 36) filthiness, or brass; put perhaps in contempt for gold. (37) against thee, fig. of the invasion of the Assyrians, etc. (38) break wedlock, are unfaithful to marriage vows.[a] blood, or destruction of thine inhabitants.

Infanticide.—Mr. Ellis, in his *Missionary Tour*, relates the following shocking instance of infanticide. A man and his wife, tenants of Mr. Young, who has for many years held, under the king, the small district of Kukuwaw, situate on the centre of Waiakea Bay, resided not far from Maaro's house. They had one child, a fine little boy. A quarrel arose between them on one occasion respecting this child. The wife, refusing to accede to the wishes of the husband, he, in revenge, caught up the child by the head and the feet, broke its back across his knee, and then threw it down in expiring agonies before her. Struck with the atrocity of the act, Mr. Young seized the man, led him before the king Tamehameha, who was then at Waiakea, and requested that he might be punished. The king inquired, "To whom did the child he has murdered belong?" Mr. Young answered that it was his own son. "Then," said the king, "neither you nor I have any right to interfere; I cannot say anything to him."[b]

40—43. (40) stone thee, Jno. viii. 5—7. (41) burn .. fire, *comp.* Ge. xxxviii. 24; De. xiii. 16. sight .. women, *i.e.* of other nations, as Syrians, Philistines, etc.[a] (42) to rest, when the fitting punishment has been brought on thee.[b] (43) fretted me, a word suitable to a grieved and injured husband. Is. lxiii. 10. lewdness, the wickedness of spiritual adultery.[c] Comp. Le xix. 29.

Present gratification of passion.—It is of the nature of passion to seize upon the present gratification, utterly irrespective of consequences, and utterly regardless of other or more excellent gratifications, which may be obtained by self-denial. He whose passions are inflamed looks at nothing beyond the present gratification. Hence he is liable to seize upon a present enjoyment, to the exclusion of a much more valuable one in future, and even in such a manner as to entail upon himself poignant and remediless misery. And hence, in order to be enabled to enjoy all the happiness of which his present state is capable, the sensitive part of man needs to be combined with another, which, upon a comparison of the present with the future, shall impel him towards that mode either of gratification or of self-denial which shall most promote his happiness upon the whole. Such is self-love. We give this name to that part of our constitution by which we are incited to do or to forbear, to gratify or to deny our desires, simply on the ground of obtaining the greatest amount of happiness for ourselves, taking into view a limited future, or else our entire future existence. When we act from simple respect to present gratification, we act from passion. When we act from a respect to our whole individual happiness, without regard to the present, only as it is a part of the whole,

Le. xx. 10; De. xxii. 22.

"Modesty is silent when it would be improper to speak; the humble, without being called upon, never recollects to say anything of himself."—*Lavater.*

All the wickedness you have done in your life, was first done in your heart.

b R. T. S.

a "The judgment I will execute upon thee shall be for an instruction to other nations, how they follow thine ill-practices."—*Lowth.*

b "It is not a mitigation of the penalty that is here foretold, but such an utter destruction of *all* the guilty that there shall be no need of further punishment."—*Calvin.*

c "Trans. 'I will not do what is scandalous (viz. encouraging thee in thy sin by letting it pass with impunity) upon all thine abominations.'"—*Fairbairn.*

and without any regard to the happiness of others only as it will contribute to our own, we are then said to act from self-love.[d]

44—47. (44) the mother, with reference to the Hittite mother (*v.* 3). (45) sister . . sisters, *i.e.* of Sodom and Samaria. (46) elder sister, bec. the capital of the more important kingdom of Israel, and as setting the example of idolatry. left hand, *i.e.* of one looking eastward. Samaria lay to the north. her daughters, her neighbouring and dependent towns.[a] (47) very little thing, or loathed as a small thing. Judah had even gone to extreme lengths in idolatrous wickedness.

Parental responsibility.—And what will parents be able to say to God at the day of judgment, for all their neglect of their children, in matter of instruction and example, and restraint from evil? How will it make your ears tingle when God shall arise terribly to judgment, and say to you, Behold the children which I have given you; they were ignorant, and you instructed them not; they made themselves vile, and you restrained them not. Why did you not have them instructed and trained up in piety and devotion? You have neglected this duty, and now your children, whose souls you have ruined by your neglect, will follow you to hell, to be an addition to your torments there. Will not your children themselves challenge you at that day, and say to you, one by one, "Had you been as careful to teach me the good knowledge of the Lord as I was capable of learning it, had you been as forward to instruct me in my duty as I was ready to have hearkened to it, it had not been with me as it is this day. I had not now stood here trembling, in fearful expectation of the eternal doom which is just ready to be passed upon me."[b]

48—52. (48) not done . . as thou, yet Sodom's sins brought an awful Divine judgment. (49) idleness, the secret of immorality, and the service of formal religions.[a] The fruitful land of Sodom[b] made her people proud, wealthy, idle, and voluptuous. hand of the poor, neglect of the poor and suffering is a high moral offence in the sight of God. (50) took them away, Ge. xix. 24. (51) justified, *i.e.* made them appear almost good, when set in contrast with thee. (52) bear . . shame, *i.e.* the disgrace which an overwhelming punishment will bring upon thee.

Gradual growth of passion.—

As years enlarged his form, in moody hours,
His mind betrayed its weakness with its powers;
Alike his fairest hopes and strangest fears
Were nursed in silence, or divulged with tears;
The fulness of his heart repressed his tongue,
Though none might rival Javan when he sung.
He loved, in lonely indolence reclined,
To watch the clouds, and listen to the wind.
But from the north when snow and tempest came.
His nobler spirit mounted into flame;
With stern delight he roamed the howling woods,
Or hung in ecstasy o'er headlong floods.
Meanwhile, excursive fancy longed to view
The world, which yet by fame alone he knew;
The joys of freedom were his daily theme,

d Wayland.

a "The worship of Moloch was generally practised by the ten tribes, whose metropolis was Samaria; as it was by the Amorites, who derived their original from Lot, an inhabitant of Sodom."—*Lowth.*

v. 44. *J. W. Warter*, i. 461.

"We oft by lightning read in darkest nights; and by your passions I read all your natures, though you at other times can keep them dark."—*John Crowne.*

b Abp. Tillotson.

a "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."—*Watts.*

b Ge. xiii. 10.

r. 49. *J. Howlett*, ii. 341; *H. Marriott*, iv. 318.

rr. 49, 50. *Dr. Conant*, v. 1.

"We say of a man who has no will-mastery, 'He is ruled by his passions;' they govern him, not he them. Centuries ago an Arab wrote: 'Passion is a tyrant which slays those whom it governs.' It is like fire, which once thoroughly kindled, can scarcely be quenched; or like the torrent, which, when it is

swollen, can no longer be restrained within its banks. Call not him a prisoner who has been put in fetters by his enemy, but rather him whose own passions overpower him to destruction."—*Joseph Johnson.*

Glory the secret of his midnight dream ;
That dream he told not ; though his heart would ache,
His home was precious for his mother's sake.
With her the lowly paths of peace he ran,
His guardian angel, till he verged to man :
But when her weary eye could watch no more,
When to the grave her timeless corse he bore,
Not Enoch's counsels could his steps restrain,
He fled, and sojourned in the land of Cain.
There, when he heard the voice of Jubal's lyre,
Instinctive genius caught the ethereal fire :
And soon, with sweetly-modulating skill,
He learned to wind the passions at his will,
To rule the chords with such mysterious art,
They seemed the life-strings of the hearer's heart!
Then glory's opening field he proudly trod,
Forsook the worship and the ways of God,
Round the vain world pursued the phantom fame,
And cast away his birthright for a name.[c]

Passion is at first like a thin thread; by-and-by it becomes like a cable.

c Montgomery.

53—57. (53) when I bring, *i.e.* if ever I do, which is very unlikely.[a] (54) that shame, in the meantime, and till then. a comfort, as a companion in suffering as well as in sin. Sinners when themselves under punishment are consoled by seeing other sinners punished. (55) when, *etc.*, comp. note on *v.* 53. (56) not mentioned, bec. it was utterly despised, and thought to be an awfully wicked place. It was held in utter contempt. (57) despise thee, in turn, when thou hast become the object of Divine indignation.

Comfort to Sodom (*vv.* 53, 54).—It is mentioned as if a fault that Jerusalem was a comfort to Sodom ; Jerusalem had, so to speak, kept Sodom and Samaria in countenance. The text suggests that it is very blameworthy in those who profess to be Christians to do anything which may comfort a sinner in his sinfulness, and encourage him to go on in his evil ways. I. One way is by being as bad as Sodom itself. II. Allowing sinful conduct to pass without rebuke. III. Seeking the society and acquaintance of an irreligious man, showing him that you think him a congenial spirit, and feel it pleasant to be with him. IV. Cherishing a worldly spirit, being as eager for worldly advantage, and unscrupulous in the means of attaining it. V. By never, in any way, warning one's neighbour that you fear and know that he is not a Christian.[b]

a "This is not a promise of restoration, but a denunciation of hopeless ruin. When Sodom shall be rebuilt and shall flourish, when Samaria shall be again a mighty people, then, but not till then, shall Jerusalem be restored."—*Spk. Com.*

b Dr. Boyd.

A little American boy, whose father possessed no religion, and neglected family prayer, spent some time in a pious family, where he was instructed in the simple truths of the Bible. While one day conversing about the greatness and goodness of God, he made this natural remark :—"We haven't got any God at my papa's house."

"The passions, like heavy bodies down steep hills, once in motion, move themselves, and know no

Parental thoughtlessness.—A careless parent one evening entered the late Rev. Mr. M'Cheyne's house, and asked him to come with him to baptise a dying child. He knew that neither this man nor his wife ever entered the door of a church : but he rose and went with him to the miserable dwelling. There an infant lay, apparently dying ; and many of the female neighbours, equally depraved with the parents, stood round. He came forward to where the child was, and spoke to the parents of their ungodly state, and fearful guilt before God, and concluded by showing them that, in such circumstances, he would consider it sinful in him to administer baptism to their infant. They said, "He might at least do it for the sake of the poor child." He told them that it was not baptism that saved a soul, and that out of true concern for themselves, he must not do as they wished.

The friends around the bed then joined the parents in upbraiding him, as having no pity on the poor infant's soul! He stood among them still, and showed them that it was they who had been thus cruel to their child; and then lifted up his voice in solemn warning, and left the house amidst their ignorant reproaches.[c]

58—60. (58) borne, the consequences of. (59) deal . . done, God would withdraw from His covenant of protection as they had withdrawn from their covenant of service.[a] (60) remember . . covenant, *i.e.* by-and-by call it to mind, and return to thee with restoring mercies. everlasting covenant, the spiritual one of the Gospel.

Solemnity of parentage.—When children are born to you, the most solemn book is opened, so far as you are concerned, that ever is opened, except that which relates to your own soul's fate. The account that begins to be incurred when parents rejoice because a child is born to them, is the most solemn account that ever is incurred, aside from one's own individual duty towards God. I do not mean that all the misconduct and evil endings of the child are to come back upon the parent, and that there is to be in the child no free-will, so that no individual account can belong to him. For if a parent has cleansed his skirts of his children, the guilt of their sins will rest on their heads, and not on his. But unless the parent can show that the child's misconduct and wreck of eternity are not attributable to any fault of his, the weight of the child's condemnation will be divided—no, it will not be divided; it will rest undivided on the child's head, and undivided on the parent's head. It is a responsibility assumed by every parent to look after the welfare, temporal and eternal, of his child. If God had sent to him an angel, with a scroll of heavenly writ, saying, "I send to school to you My well-beloved child; take it, teach it, and bring it back to heaven; and let its education be the test of your fidelity,"—if God had sent to the parent such a missive, his responsibility would not be greater or more real than that which is laid upon us when we undertake to bring up children. They are not simply playthings, although they do make playthings. They are not mere little pleasure-bells, although no bells ever ring so sweetly. They are not instruments of music, and pictures, and flowers of dear delight in our households, that we may enjoy them, and that they may enjoy themselves. They are not frolicsome kittens and singing birds for our pleasure and their own. They are God's immortals. They are sent forth to make an earthly pilgrimage, and you are their schoolmasters and pilots. It is a solemn thing to have such a charge put into your hands.[b]

61—63. (61) for daughters, Gal. iv. 26.[a] thy covenant, not by any covenant of thy making, but by sovereign grace alone. (62) establish, *etc.*, Ho. ii. 19, 20. know . . Lord, not then in judgments, but in wondrous restoring grace. (63) never . . mouth, in any attempted self-vindications. all . . done, as detailed in this chap.[b]

The effect of God's mercy on the renewed soul (*vv.* 62, 63).—I. The extent of man's wickedness. 1. Give a brief summary of the chapter; mark how this image was applicable to Judah and Jerusalem; to us also it may be applied. II. The exceeding

ground but the bottom."—*Fuller.*

c Whitecross.

a De. xxix. 12, 14.

Parricide was by the Roman law punished in a much severer manner than any other kind of homicide. After being scourged, the delinquents were sewed up in a leathern sack with a live dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape, and so cast into the sea. Solon, in his laws, made none against parricide, conceiving it impossible that any one should be guilty of so unnatural a barbarity.

"As rivers, when they overflow, drown those grounds and ruin those husbandmen which, whilst they flowed calmly betwixt their banks, they fertilised and enriched; so our passions, when they grow exorbitant and unruly, destroy those virtues to which they may be very serviceable whilst they keep within their bounds."—*Boyle.*

b Beecher.

a "In the times of the Apostles there was a particular deference paid to the Church at Jerusalem as the mother Church of the Christian world."—*Lowth.*

b "Enhancing the grace of God,

which has pardoned so many and so great sins. Nothing so melts into love and humility as the sense of the riches of God's pardoning grace."—*Fausset.*

vv. 62, 63. *M. Jackson*, ii. 31.

v. 63. *W. Dunlop*, ii. 284; *R. Erskine*, vii. 157; *J. Potts*, 72; *Dr. W. Wilson*, 253.

riches of God's grace; vile as the Jews had been He promised to restore them to favour: this promise is no doubt to be extended to us. III. The effect of this grace upon every soul of man; it is thought by some calculated to puff up pride and conceit in all who receive it. But this is—1. Contrary to reason; 2. Contrary to fact. Remember—(1) Your covenant mercies; (2) Your covenant engagements.[c]

Neglecting salvation.—Simply "neglect the great salvation," and you will make your everlasting ruin sure. Many foolish, faithless parents have stood by the grave of a child which they dug with their own hands. How? Did they administer slow poison, or strike an assassin-knife through the young heart? No; but they killed their child just as surely, by simple neglect of the first laws of health. Many a father, too, has wrung his hands in agony before a prison-cell which held a ruined son, or over the letter which told him of a son's disgrace, and on those very hands rested the guilt of that boy's ruin. Why? Had they led that son into Sabbath-breaking, or theft, or profligacy? No; but they had let the youth alone, and left him to rush into them unrestrained. Neglect was the boy's ruin. There is no need that the man in a skiff amid Niagara's rapids should row towards the cataract; resting on his oars is quite enough to send him over the awful verge.[d]

c C. Simeon, M.A. It argues a tender heart to feel you have a hard one.

d Dr. Cuyler.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

1—6. (1, 2) **riddle**, Ju. xiv. 12. Here meaning a figurative speech, or continued metaphor. One requiring serious thought to discern its meaning.[a] (3) **great eagle**, representing Nebuchadnezzar. The eagle was an Assyrian emblem.[b] **feathers**, symbols of the many nations of wh. the Bab. kingdom was composed. **divers colours**, intimating the variety of language, habits, and costumes of the peoples subject to Babylon. **highest branch**, or top shoot; *i.e.* king Jeconiah. (4) **top**, or head. **young twigs**, princes of the royal family. **traffic**, or commerce, Is. xliii. 14. (5) **seed**, *i.e.* the king's seed: ref. is to Zedekiah. **great waters**, fig. for the wealth with wh. Nebuc. supplied Zedekiah. (6) **spreading vine**,[c] one not trained to a pole, but lying on the ground. Kept low so as to secure its dependence on the Bab. king.

The eagle.—The eagle is the strongest, the fiercest, and the most rapacious of the feathered race. He dwells alone in the desert, and on the summits of the highest mountains; and suffers no bird to come with impunity within the range of his flight. His eye is dark and piercing, his beak and talons are hooked and formidable, and his cry is the terror of every wing. His figure answers to his nature; independently of his arms, he has a robust and compact body, and very powerful limbs and wings; his bones are hard, his flesh is firm, his feathers are coarse, his attitude is fierce and erect, his motions are lively, and his flight is extremely rapid. Such is the golden eagle, as described by the most accurate observers of nature. To this noble bird the Prophet Ezekiel evidently refers, in his parable to the house of Israel: "A great eagle, with great wings, long-winged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the

a "The Heb. is derived from a root meaning 'sharp,' *i.e.* calculated to stimulate attention and whet the intellect."—*Fausset.*

b For the figure see De. xxviii. 49; Je. iv. 13; Ho. viii. 1.

c The kindom of Judah is no longer likened to an independent cedar: in its depressed state it is only like a dependent vine.

"An Indian once brought up a young lion, and, finding him weak and harmless, never attempted to control him. Every day the lion gained in strength, and became more unmanageable, until at last, when ex-

highest branch of the cedar." In this parable a strict regard to physical truth is discovered in another respect, for the eagle is known to have a predilection for cedars, which are the loftiest trees in the forest, and therefore more suited to his daring temper than any other. La Roque found a number of large eagle's feathers scattered on the ground beneath the lofty cedars which still crown the summits of Lebanon, on the highest branches of which that fierce destroyer occasionally perches.[d]

7—10. (7) another . . eagle, this represents Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt. bend . . him, Zedekiah, inclined to favour the Egyptian alliance. furrows, *etc., i.e.* "From the furrows where it was planted to bring forth fruit for *another*, it shot forth its roots to *him*."[a] (8) great waters, *comp. v.* 5. (9) shall it prosper? in such manifestly unfaithful ways. he, *i.e.* the insulted Nebuchadnezzar. spring, or growth. (10) east wind, in the E., as with us, so injurious to vegetation.[b]

The eagle.—The reason of the figure must be obvious to every reader: the erect and majestic mien of the eagle point him out as the intended sovereign of the feathered race; he is therefore the fit emblem of superior excellence, and of regal majesty and power. Xenophon and other ancient historians inform us that the golden eagle with extended wings was the ensign of the Persian monarchs, long before it was adopted by the Romans; and it is very probable that the Persians borrowed the symbol from the ancient Assyrians, in whose banners it waved, till imperial Babylon bowed her head to the yoke of Cyrus. If this conjecture be well founded, it discovers the reason why the sacred writers, in describing the victorious march of the Assyrian armies, allude so frequently to the expanded eagle. Referring still to the Babylonian monarch, the Prophet Hosea proclaimed in the ears of Israel, the measure of whose iniquities was nearly full: "He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord." Jeremiah predicted a similar calamity to the posterity of Lot: "For thus saith the Lord, Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab;" and the same figure is employed to denote the sudden destruction which overtook the house of Esau: "Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah." The words of these inspired Prophets were not suffered to fall to the ground; they received a full accomplishment in the irresistible impetuosity and complete success with which the Babylonian monarchs, and particularly Nebuchadnezzar, pursued their plans of conquest. Ezekiel denominates him with striking propriety, "a great eagle with great wings;" because he was the most powerful monarch of his time, and led into the field more numerous and better appointed armies (which the Prophet calls, by a beautiful figure, his wings) than perhaps the world had ever seen.[c]

11—15. (11, 12) king of Babylon, *i.e.* the great eagle. (13) king's seed, *i.e.* his uncle, Zedekiah. oath, of allegiance, on condition of wh. oath Zedekiah was given the throne. (14) base, as a dependent kingdom: tributary to Babylon. lift itself up, in rebellions. (15) sending . . Egypt, *comp.* 2 Ki xxiv. 20; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 13; Je. xxxvii. 5—7. prosper, in violating his oath to Nebuc. and sinning against God's commands, De. xvii. 16.

cited by rage, he fell upon the Indian and tore him to pieces. Passion resembles that lion."—*Biblical Treasury.*

d Paxton.

a "Zedekiah was courting the favour of Egypt while he owed his very position to the bounty of Assyria."—*Syk. Com.*

b "The Prophet compares the Chaldæan army to a parching wind that blasts the fruits of the earth, withers the leaves of the trees, and makes everything look naked and bare."—*Lowth.*

"All the fresh leaves of her sprouting shall wither."—*Wordsworth.*

"Passion is the great mover and spring of the soul. When men's passions are strongest, they may have great and noble effects; but they are then also apt to fall into the greatest miscarriages."—*Sprat.*

c Paxton.

r. 15. *F. H. Hutton*, 87.

"Passions directed to their right end may fail in their manner but not in their measure. When the subject of our hatred is sin, it

cannot be too deep: when the object of our love is God, it cannot be too high. Moderation may become a fault. To be but warm when God commands us to be hot is sinful. We belie virtue by the constant dulness of a mediocrity."—*Feltham.*

"When headstrong passion gets the reins of reason, the force of nature, like too strong a gale, for want of ballast, oversets the vessel."—*Higgons.*

a *Sigourney.*

The conqueror.—

History hath set her crown
Upon the conqueror's head,
And bade the awestruck world bow down
Before his banner's head.
So down the world hath bow'd,
Upon her letter'd page,
And the wild homage of the crowd
Swell'd on from age to age.

What miseries mark'd his way,
How oft the orphan wept,
How deep the earth in sackcloth lay,
Faint trace her annals kept.
Though like a torrent's flow
The widow's tears gush'd out,
The current of that secret woe
Quell'd not the victor's shout.

The Gospel's sacred scroll
A different standard shows:
Its plaudit on the humble soul,
And contrite, it bestows.
To men of holy life
Its glorious crown is given,
Who nurse, amid this vale of strife,
The peaceful germs of heaven.[a]

16—18. (16) shall die, *comp.* ch. xii. 13. (17) neither, *etc.*, Je. xxxvii. 7. mounts . . forts, as defences; or as modes of attacking the Chaldæan besiegers of Jerusalem. (18) despised the oath, *v.* 13. given his hand,[a] and so pledging his troth and fealty.

Unfruitfulness of ambition.—I have often been astonished at the softness in which other minds seem to have passed their day: the ripened pasture and clustering vineyards of imagination: the mental Arcadia in which they describe themselves as having loitered from year to year. Yet, can I have faith in this perpetual Claude Lorraine pencil—this undying verdure of the soil—this gold and purple suffusion of the sky—those pomps of the palace and the pencil with their pageants and nymphs, giving life to their landscape; while mine was a continual encounter with difficulty, a continual summons to self-control? A march, not unlike that of the climber up the side of Etna; every step through ruins, the vestiges of former conflagrations; the ground I trode, rocks that had once been flame: every advance a new trial of my feelings or my fortitude; every stage of the ascent leading me, like the traveller, into a higher region of sand or ashes; until, at the highest, I stood in a circle of eternal frost, with all the rich and human landscape below fading away in distance, and looked down only on a gulf of fire.[b]

19—21. (19) mine oath, bec. God was working His purposes through the action of Nebuchadnezzar, who was, in some sense, His representative. (20) spread my net, *comp.* ch. xii. 13, xxxii. 3. plead with him, or bring him into judgment.[a] (21) fugitives, those belonging to him who would try to escape, ch. xii. 14.

a "This ceremony was especially used when an inferior made profession of his subjection to his superior."—*Lowth.*

Is. xli. 13.

v. 16. *J. Weemse*, i. 152.

The conquests of Alexander the Great could not satisfy him; for when he had conquered the whole of one known world, he sat down and wept because he knew of no other world to conquer.

b *Marston.*

a Reckon with him.

"Lowliness is young ambition's ladder, whereto the climber upwards turns his

Sir Walter Raleigh.—Fuller, in his *Worthies*, gives the following account of Sir Walter Raleigh's first rise in life:—"This Captain Raleigh," he says, "coming out of Ireland into the English Court in good habit (his clothes being then a considerable part of his estate) found the queen walking, till meeting with a dirty place, she seemed to scruple going over it. Presently Raleigh cast and spread his new plush cloak on the ground, whereupon the queen trod gently, rewarding him afterwards with many suits for his so free and seasonable tender of so fair a foot-cloth. An advantageous admittance into the first notice of a prince, is more than half a degree of preferment. When Sir Walter found some hopes of the queen's favour reflecting on him, he wrote on a glass window obvious to the queen's eye—

'Fain would I climb, but fear I to fall.'

Her majesty, either espying or being showed it, did under write—

'If thy heart fail thee, climb not at all.'

How great a person in that Court this knight did afterwards prove to be, is scarcely unknown to any."[b]

22—24. (22) highest branch, many think the reference in this *v.* is to Messiah. tender one, *comp.* Is. xi. 1, liii. Used in reference to the low estate of the family of David when Messiah was born. (23) mount, *etc.*, first reference to Mount Moriah, as a fig. of the exalted place found for Messiah. bring forth, *etc.*, indicating the growth of the Christian Church or kingdom. (24) trees . . field, other, and worldly kingdoms.[a]

Fowl of every wing (*v.* 24).—The cedar a royal tree. Christ the true cedar, and all people are the birds that lodge in its branches. 1. The young may come; 2. The aged may come; 3. The very bad, the outrageously sinful, may come; 4. All the dying may find their nest in this goodly cedar.[b]

Fowl of every wing.—The cedar of Lebanon is a royal tree. It stands six thousand feet above the level of the sea. A missionary counted the concentric circles, and found one tree thirty-five hundred years old—long-rooted, broad-branched, all the year in luxuriant foliage. The same branches that bent in the hurricane that David saw sweeping over Lebanon, rock to-day over the head of the American traveller. This monarch of the forest, with its leavy fingers, plucks the honours of a thousand years, and sprinkles them upon its own uplifted brow, as though some great Hallelujah of heaven had been planted upon Lebanon, and it were rising up with all its long-armed strength to take hold of the hills whence it came. Oh! what a fine place for birds to nest in! In hot days they come thither—the eagle, the dove, the swallow, the sparrow, and the raven. My text intimates that Christ is the cedar, and the people from all quarters are the birds that lodge among the branches. "It shall be a goodly cedar, and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing." As in Ezekiel's time, so now. Christ is a goodly cedar: and to Him are flying all kinds of people, young and old, rich and poor: men high-soaring as the eagle, those fierce as the raven, and those gentle as the dove. "All fowl of every wing."[c]

face; but when he once obtains the utmost round, he then unto the ladder turns his back, looks in the clouds, scorning the bare degrees by which he did ascend."—*Shakespeare.*

"Strong passions work wonders, when there is a greater strength of reason to curb them."—*Tucker.*

b Percy Anec.

a "Christ's kingdom shall by degrees exalt itself above all the kingdoms of the world; and shall at length put an end to them, and itself continue unto all eternity."—*Lowth.*

Da. iv. 35, 44, vii. 27; Lu. i. 33; 1 Co. xv. 24.

vv. 22—24. *J. Alting, Op.* ii. 4, 139; *P. Allix*, 325; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 207.

v. 24. *Dr. J. Owen*, xv. 415.

b Dr. Talmage.

"What profits us that we from heaven derive a soul immortal, and with looks erect survey the stars, if, like the brutal kind, we follow where our passions lead the way?"—*Dryden.*

c Dr. Talmage.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

1—4. (1, 2) concerning . . Israel, *i.e.* in reference to its desolations. fathers . . edge, the present generation suffers for the sins committed by previous generations.[a] (3) not . . use, &c. God will plainly punish this generation for their own sins; and they will not be able to shift the blame on to their fathers. (4) all . . mine, implying direct and individual dealing with each.

The entail of suffering (*v.* 2).—I. The fact is indisputable. II. The procedure may be vindicated. III. The use of the proverb shall cease. 1. An acquaintance with the rules which guide the Divine judgment of transgressors shall prevent men from using this proverb; 2. The common relation which all men sustain to Him may well prevent us from attributing iniquity to Him; 3. The true spirit of penitence which a knowledge of His equity and His love shall excite, shall in a similar manner acquit Him; 4. If any darkness yet seem to hover around these truths, the dawn of the last day shall assuredly dispel it.[b]

An unfaithful father.—A father who had a son in college requested a minister who was going through the town where he was to call on him and converse with him in reference to the salvation of his soul. The minister called, agreeable to the request of the father, and introduced the subject of religion. He alluded to the feelings and request of the father, who wished him by all means to attend first to the salvation of his soul. The young man replied, "Did my father send such word as that?" "He did," was the reply. "Then," said the young man, "my father is a dishonest man." "But why do you say he is dishonest?" said the minister. "Because," replied the student, "he has often advised me, in regard to the course he would have me pursue in life, how to gain the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, but he is not the man that has ever manifested any interest in regard to the salvation of my soul, any more than if I had no soul!"[c]

5—9. (5) just, comprehensive term for all moral rightness. (6) eaten . . mountains, sharing in the sacrificial feasts on the high places, where are the idol-shrines.[a] (7) oppressed, *etc.*, Ex. xxii. 25, 26; De. xxiv. 12. given . . hungry, De. xv. 7. (8) usury, Ex. xxii. 25; Le. xxv. 36, 37; De. xxiii. 19; Ps. xv. 5. (9) truly, obediently, faithfully, and kindly. live, or preserve his life. Such a man comes into no Divine judgment.

Character—gone before.—A young man's character was such as to excite universal disapprobation. He could no longer resist the pressure of public sentiment. He disposed of his property, and attempted to resume business in a distant part of the country. But his character, or rather his reputation, had gone before him. Men regarded him with suspicion. He was unable to secure the confidence and countenance necessary to success. In this case his sins went before him to his new place of residence. The sins of men go before them still further. They go before them to the judgment, and will be ready to meet them there. What a fearful meeting! How impossible to escape from their

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a "It is nowhere said in O. T. or N. T. that God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, except where the children obstinately persist in imitating the iniquity of the fathers."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 1. *Dr. R. Clerke,* 389.

v. 2. *Dr. W. Landon,* 110.

v. 4. *H. Worthington,* 169; *E. G. Marsh,* 115.

b *G.* in *Homilist.*

"God draweth straight lines, but we think and call them crooked. Ezek. xviii. 25."—*Rutherford.*

"When passions glow, the heart, like heated steel, takes each impression, and is work'd at pleasure."—*Young.*

c *Cheever.*

a De. xii. 2; Eze. vi. 13, xvi. 16, 24, xx. 28; 1 Co. x. 21.

"The humblest trade has in it elbow-room for all the virtues. That huckster can be true and honest and honourable: what more can Rothschild be? The excellence of a circle lies in its roundness, not its bigness. The rim of a three-penny bit is a true circle, and would not be mended, but only

accusings and consequences. It is related of a prisoner that, after he had toiled for months in constructing a mine from his dungeon, by means of which he hoped to escape, when at last he broke ground and let in the light of day which he had so fondly hoped to enjoy, the first object he saw was an armed jailer waiting to arrest him! That jailer struck far less dismay and despair to the heart of the prisoner than meeting with his sins will strike to the heart of the sinner at the day of judgment.[b]

10—13. (10) robber, or "breaker up of a house." (11) any of those, described in *vv.* 5—9. (12) lifted . . eyes, in adoration or supplication. (13) blood, or death. "His destruction is owing wholly to himself."[a]

Inconsistency of parents.—Parents, to do them justice, are seldom sparing of lessons of virtue and religion, in admonitions which cost little and which profit less, whilst their example exhibits a continual contradiction of what they teach. A father, for instance, will, with solemnity and apparent earnestness, warn his son against idleness, excess in drinking, debauchery, and extravagance, who himself loiters about all day without employment, comes home every night drunk; is made infamous in his neighbourhood by some profligate connection, and wastes the fortune which should support, or remain a provision for his family, in riot, or luxury, or ostentation. Or he will discourse gravely before his children of the obligation and importance of revealed religion, whilst they see the most frivolous, and oftentimes feigned excuses, detain him from its reasonable and solemn ordinances. Or he will set before them, perhaps, the supreme and tremendous authority of Almighty God; that such a Being ought not to be named, or even thought upon, without sentiments of profound awe and veneration. This may be the lecture he delivers to his family one hour, when the next, if an occasion arise to excite his anger or his surprise, they will hear him treat the name of the Deity with the most irreverent profanation, and sport with the terms and denunciations of the Christian religion as if they were the language of some ridiculous and long exploded superstition. Now, even a child is not to be imposed upon by such mockery. He sees through the grimace of this counterfeited concern for virtue. He discovers that his parent is acting a part, and receives his admonitions as he would hear the same maxims from the mouth of a player. And when once this opinion has taken possession of the child's mind, it has a fatal effect upon the parent's influence in all subjects, even those in which he himself may be sincere and convinced.[b]

14—18. (14) if he, *i.e.* the utterly bad man, who brings destruction down upon his own head. considereth, layeth it to heart. not such like, not any of the evil things. (15—17) *comp. vv.* 5—9. not . . father, but judgment shall spend itself on the sinful father.[a] (18) his brother, *i.e.* his brother-man.

Parents should not deceive their children—The fawn and the leopard.—In a German fable a doe warns her youthful offspring to beware, as she skips about the forest, of that dangerous animal the leopard. "And what is the leopard like?" inquires the fawn. "Oh, it is a dreadful-looking monster; its eyes glare and

magnified, if swelled till it equalled in size the tire of a cart-wheel, or dilated till it touched the outline of a planet."—*S. Coley.*

b Dr. Jeffers.

a "Upon his own head, but not on the heads of his children, if they do not imitate him." — *Wordsworth.*

A house took fire. The mother was busiest of all saving her trinkets. The fire spread rapidly. The mother, trying to enter the house a second time, was stopped. She shrieked in anguish; for her babe lay in its cradle in the burning building. At what a cost had she saved her trifles! Should she not have rescued the child first? Is not this true of our children's souls now in danger of eternal fire?

"A man's own heart must ever be given to gain that of another." —*Goldsmith.*

b Paley.

a It is nevertheless true that hereditary disabilities do follow on parental wrong-doings; but rather on parental *vices* and *immoralities* than on such acts of unkindness, in-

justice, and idolatry as are dealt with by Ezekiel.

v. 14. *D. S. Deyling*, iii. 507.

"Govern your passions, or otherwise they will govern you."—*Horace.*

its jaws drop blood." The fawn goes off to roam the wood, and in the course of her rambles espies, at some distance in the long grass, a graceful creature with beautifully spotted hide; its movements are elegant and even playful; its aspect betrays no sanguinary stain nor fierceness of purpose. "Well, this cannot be the leopard," says the fawn; "this is not the creature which my parent described. I must go and make acquaintance with it." She accordingly advances to meet the new-found friend, and—but one need not stop to mention the result. How often do well-meaning but unwise parents deceive their children to their destruction!

19—23. (19) **why?** *i.e.* is it not a common proverb that the son bears the father's iniquity? The Jews appeal to their own experience. **when**, *etc.*, implying that if the Jews of that generation had done right, they would not have been punished for their *fathers'* sins of the previous generations. (20) **son**, *etc.*, comp. De. xxiv. 16.[a] (21) **turn . . sins**, then he shall not be dealt with on the ground of the forsaken sins, but on the ground of the new obedience. (22) **not be mentioned**, being forgiven they shall be forgotten.[b] (23) **any pleasure**, the frequency of prophetic denunciation might produce such an impression.[c]

God's conduct to the posterity of the wicked (*v.* 20).—I. See **if**, and in what sense, children bear the evils of their parents' iniquities. 1. The mind and body exert a remarkable influence on each other; 2. Children are greatly influenced by the position their parents occupy; 3. They are powerfully influenced by their parents' example; 4. They partake directly of the evil doings of their parents. II. Does God inflict this penalty upon them for the parents' sins? Ezekiel says "No." 1. It would be opposed to goodness and mercy: 2. To justice; 3. To fact; 4. To individual responsibility. III. To reconcile the teachings of Moses (Ex. xx. 5) and Ezekiel—1. God punishes rebellious parents; 2. Children hating Him learn—(1) God's government is the reflection of His goodness and holiness: (2) Every man is individually accountable; (3) Men will be judged according to their circumstances; (4) Jesus is a universal Saviour for all sinners.[d]

24—26. (24) **righteous**, *etc.*, this is the answering side of the truth of God's dealings declared in *vv.* 21, 22.[a] **turneth away**, in utter apostasy. Reference is not to the temporary failures and fallings of the godly. **mentioned**, taken into account as a mitigation of sentence. (25) **not equal**, or weighed out, balanced; properly adjusted to the several cases.[b] (26) **his iniquity**, *i.e.* you need go no further for explanation than the fact of his own sin.

The smiter smitten (*v.* 25).—Take in conjunction with this text Acts viii. 3, xiv. 12, ix. 1, xxiii. 12; Gal. i. 13; 2 Cor. xi. 23, xxvi. 10, xvi. 23; Gal. vi. 7. All these experiences were undergone by the same person. The persecutor was persecuted, etc. By these facts we are taught—I. That a man's life comes back upon him. II. That a man's Christian experience must be affected by the unchristian life he has lived. We see—1. That the distribution of penalties is God's work, not man's: 2. That under all the apparent confusion of human life there is a

a 2 Ki. xiv. 6; 2 Chr. xxv. 4; Je. xxxi. 29.

b Je. xxxi. 34; Am. viii. 7.

c 1 Ti. ii. 4; 2 Pe. iii. 9.

v. 20. *J. Hinks*, 343.

v. 23. *D. Featley*, 747; *T. Manton*, v. 1008; *F. Dusautoy*, 117; *A. Roberts*, ii. 221.

"No man's body is as strong as his appetites, but Heaven has corrected the boundlessness of his voluptuous desires by stinting his strength and contracting his capacities."—*Tillotson.*

d *Dr. Burns.*

a Comp. 2 Pe. ii. 21.

"Such a one sins against a clearer light and greater convictions, and withal is guilty of the greatest ingratitude, in doing despite unto the Spirit of grace."—*Lorth.*

b "It was really their way that was unequal, since living in sin they expected to be dealt with as if they were righteous. God's way was invariably to deal with

principle of justice; 3. That the greatest sufferings may be borne with patience and hopefulness.[c]

27—30. (27) turneth, in penitence of heart that makes him alter his conduct. (28) considereth, *see v.* 14. (29) not equal, *v.* 25. (30) every one . . ways, and surely no principle of judgment can be better than this. repent, the inward feeling of penitence. turn yourselves, the corresponding outward act. This call intimates that, if thus strictly judged, the whole nation would be found guilty.

Practical intention of the Gospel (*v.* 27).—The text presents a prospect of the possibility of salvation in the use of proper means. I. The first step to salvation is here described to be the relinquishment of former evil practices. II. The next step is to do that which is lawful and right.[a]

31, 32. (31) make . . heart, set yourselves on the endeavour to cherish other feelings and wishes. The "new heart" indicates a religion that is *spiritual*, not ceremonial. The effort to renew our own heart will surely drive us to seek the new heart from God, who alone can give it by His Spirit.[a] Comp. Ps. li. 1—5. 10. 11. (32) no pleasure, *v.* 23.

Self-destruction (*v.* 31).—I. The nature of eternal death. 1. A state of conscious existence; 2. A state of deprivation; 3. A state of hideousness. II. The question proposed. 1. There is no necessity for it in the nature of God; 2. There is no necessity in the will of man; 3. There is no necessity on account of our circumstances.[b]

The garden of God.—

Christ in His heavenly garden walks all day,
And calls to souls upon the world's highway.
Wearied with trifles, maimed and sick with sin,
Christ by the gate stands, and invites them in.

"How long, unwise, will ye pursue your woe?
Here from the throne sweet waters ever go;
Here the white lilies shine like stars above;
Here in the red rose burns the face of Love.

"'Tis not from earthly paths I bid you flee,
But lighter in My ways your feet will be:
'Tis not to summon you from human mirth,
But add a depth and sweetness not of earth.

"Still by the gate I stand as on ye stray;
Turn your steps hither; am not I the Way?
The sun is falling fast, the night is nigh;
Why will ye wander? Wherefore will ye die?

"Look on My hands and side, for I am He;
None to the Father cometh but by Me;
For you I died; once more I call you home:
I live again for you—My children, come!"

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

1—4. (1) lamentation, a mournful ditty suitable for a funeral. princes of Israel, those of the house of Judah. Some think there is special reference to Zedekiah.[c] Others refer to Jehoahaz

different men according to their deserts."—*Faussel.*

c Dr. Parker.

v. 27. *Dr. A. Littleton*, 22; *Dr. B. Whichcote*, i. 303; *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 7; *W. Farington*, 185; *J. Herrey*, 4; *Dr. R. Parkinson*, i. 241; *R. W. Evans*, 219; *Dr. R. W. Jelf*, i. 267; *F. Arnold*, 46.

v. 28. *R. S. Colton*, 40.

a J. E. Golding.

a Je. xxxii. 39; Eze. xi. 19, xxxvi. 26.

"Although God 'works in us to will and to do,' and is the first mover in our regeneration, yet we must work together with His grace, at least willingly receive it, and not quench or resist its motions."—*Lowth.*

v. 31. *Dr. H. Hammond*, iv. 595; *Dr. T. Pierce*, 125; *W. Dunlop*, ii. 18.

b W. W. Whythe.

A bear once entered a saw-mill, sat down on the log which was moving close under the saw, and began to eat the sawyer's dinner. Soon he felt a nip at his tail, and gave a growl; then another, which so aroused his bear-nature, that he turned and hugged the great saw till he was sawed in two.

c Palgrave.

a Hitzig, Ewald.

and Jehoiachin, as a warning to Zedekiah.[h] (2) thy mother, the land of Judah, as the native country of the princes addressed. lioness,[c] bec. fierce at catching prey; in allusion to her heathenish practices. lay . . lions,[d] fig. of her corrupting intercourse with heathen nations. (3) one . . whelps, *viz.* Jehoahaz.[e] learned . . prey, alluding to this king following the evil and idolatrous practices of his predecessors. (4) nations, esp. Egypt.[f] pit, hunter's pit, arranged for securing wild animals,[g] 2 Ki. xxiii. 33; Je. xxii. 11.

True patriots.—The men and women that are patriots—who are they! Mothers who are bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—they are writing better declarations of independence than ever Thomas Jefferson inscribed. Humble fathers who are training their children in essential manliness, in self-reliance, in independence, making them ashamed to beg, and proud to rely upon their own resources—they are patriots. They are lovers of our country. The humble schoolmistress that gathers her summer brood and pours her refined life into the bosom of these rustics—she is a patriot. The schoolmaster, who stands nearer to the work of God in the world, and in our age, than even the minister himself does—he is the patriot. The editor, that is taking knowledge, and giving to it multiform wings, and setting it flying round and round the world—he is the patriot. Those men who augment the substantial qualities of manhood—the preachers of the Gospel, the humble missionary, the colporteur, the devoted Christian in every neighbourhood—those men are working for the spiritual development of man—they are God's truest patriots. They, of every name, everywhere, who make men larger, are working for liberty; and they who are demoralising men, and making license turn into lust and belluine appetites, are the devil's instruments, and are working for bondage and for despotism.[h]

5—9. (5) another, *viz.* Jehoiachin, 2 Ki. xxiv. 6. He was put on the throne by the consent of the people. (6) catch . . prey, followed the same idolatrous course as his predecessor.[a] (7) knew, *i.e.* he claimed as his own. desolate palaces, lit. *widows*, or widowed palaces: those from wh. he had turned out the occupants, Je. xxii. 15, 16. (8) nations, here the Chaldæans. For the fate of Jehoiachin see 2 Ki. xxiv. 10—12. (9) voice . . mountains, as a lion seeking her prey.

Funeral sermon for Cromwell.—On the death of Oliver Cromwell, a funeral sermon was preached at Christ Church, Dublin, before the lord deputy, by his chaplain, Dr. Harrison, from these words: "And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him," 2 Chron. xx. 24. "This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation," Ezek. xix. 14. The sermon, which was full of the praises of Cromwell, was afterwards published by one Edward Matthews, under the title of *Threni Hybernici; or, Ireland Sympathising with England and Scotland in a sad Lamentation for her Josiah.* The sermon was dedicated, in the most fulsome language, to Richard Cromwell, by Edward Matthews. "Divine Providence," he says, "made it my lot to hear this sermon pathetically delivered by that pious divine, Dr. Harrison, in a full fluent manner, extracting tears from the eyes, and sighs from the hearts of the hearers. I moved the doctor for the printing thereof, being so precious a piece, touching so unparalleled a person, that it was

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b Spk. Com.

c Ge. xlix. 9; Nu. xxiii. 24.

d Arab name for a lion is "the coucher."

e 2 Ki. xxiii. 33.

f "There is an allusion to the custom, when the news arrives that a lion or other savage beast is committing mischief, of assembling on all sides to seize and slay it."—*Michaelis.*

g Ps. xxxv. 7, xciv. 13.

"It is folly to pretend that one ever wholly recovers from a disappointed passion. Such wounds always leave a scar. There are faces I can never look upon without emotion, there are names I can never hear spoken without almost starting."—*Longfellow.*

h Beecher.

a "Or he learned and practised all the methods of tyranny and oppression."—*Lowth.*

"Passion itself is very figurative, and often bursts out into metaphors; but, in touching the pathos, the poet must be perfectly well acquainted with the emotions of the human soul, and carefully distinguish between those metaphors which rise glowing from the heart, and those cold conceits which are engendered in the fancy."—*Goldsmith.*

"Our passions

more fit to be made public, than perish in oblivion; who in a modest manner termed it a sudden imperfect and unpolished collection of scattered thoughts and notes, which brevity of time, and burthen of spirit, would not permit him more completely to compile. The usefulness of the piece, replete with so many observations, together with the desire of erecting all lasting monuments that might lead to the eternising of the blessed memory of that thrice-renowned patron and pattern of piety, your royal father (whose pious life is his never-perishing pyramid, every man's heart being his tomb, every good man's tongue an epitaph), hath emboldened me, in all humility, to present it to your highness as a lively effigy to mind you of his matchless virtues. And as the learned author intended it not so much for the eye or ear, as for the heart: not for only reading, but practice principally; so may your highness please to make use thereof as a pattern of imitation for piety and reformation in the nations." [b]

never wholly die, but, in the last cantos of life's romantic epos, they rise up again and do battle, like some of Ariosto's heroes, who have already been quietly interred, and ought to be turned to dust." —*Longfellow.*

b Percy Anec.

10—14. (10) thy mother, the land of Judah. Jehoiachin is here addressed. vine .. blood, poetical reference to the infant before it was washed; the people were planted in Canaan when but an infant nation. full of branches, the people multiplied under God's blessing.[a] (11) sceptres, Ge. xlix. 10. (12) east .. fruit, Ho. xiii. 15. (13) wilderness, that of Babylon. (14) fire .. out, *comp.* Ju. ix. 15. Allusion is to Zedekiah.

Sceptres.—The allusion here is evidently to the sceptres of the ancients, which were no other than walking-sticks, cut from the stems or branches of trees, and decorated with gold, or studded with golden nails. Thus Achilles is introduced as swearing by a sceptre, which being cut from the trunk of a tree on the mountains, and stripped of its bark and leaves, should never more produce leaves and branches, or sprout again. Such a one the Grecian judges carried in their hands. See Homer, *Il.* i. 234.[b]

a "The country of Judæa, from whence the royal family have their original, was like a fruitful vine in a flourishing condition."—*Lowth.*

"The metaphor of the *blood* is less harsh in the Heb. bec. the juice of a vine is called in Scripture its blood. Ge. xlix. 11."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 12. *Jon. Edwards,* ii. 36.

b Burder.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

1—4. (1) elders, as ch. viii. 1, xiv. 1. (2, 3) not be inquired, *i.e.* not pay any heed to your inquiries.[a] (4) judge, *i.e.* plead in their behalf. Addressed to Ezekiel.

Tricks of formalism.—In Mrs. Grant's *Letters from the Mountains* (1806), is the following anecdote of the then Duchess of Gordon. "The duchess said that on Sunday she never saw company, nor played cards, nor went out: in England, indeed, she did so, because every one else did the same, but she would not introduce those manners into this country (Scotland). I stared at these gradations of piety growing warmer as it came northward, but was wise enough to stare silently." The tricks of formalism and hypocrisy are evermore the same. Man is regarded more than God. What Mrs. Grundy may say has far more influence with many than what the Lord may say. This is miserable meanness and rank impiety.[b]

a "Because ye inquire with an evil temper, a cavilling spirit, and a murmuring tone, and not with penitential meekness, and self-abasement for your sin, and with humble submission to the will of God."—*Wordsworth.*

vv. 1—3. *H. Goodwin,* iii. 106.

v. 3. *R. Warner,* iii. 147.

b Spurgeon.

5—9. (5) lifted .. hand, the sign of swearing. known, by My judgments and deliverances.[a] I .. God, *i.e.* I am the God you should serve, and I alone. (6) espied, observed and

a Ex. iii. 8, iv. 31.

chose, as specially suitable for them. glory, or the fairest flower of all lands. (7) cast, *etc.*, though Moses gives no positive record of the Israelites having taken up with Egyptian idolatries, inclination towards such is implied in the readiness of the people to worship the golden calf. (8) then I said, *i.e.* even while they were in Egypt I thought of destroying them. (9) my name's sake,[b] the honour of wh. was pledged in the covenant with the patriarchs.

The work wrought by God for His name's sake (*v.* 9).—There are three questions to be answered from the text. Who? What? Why? I. Who it is that is said to work? II. What is it that He hath wrought? III. Why is it that He hath wrought?[c]

10—13. (10) caused . . Egypt, Ex. xiii. 18. (11) statutes, as on Mt. Sinai, Ex. xx. man do, Le. xviii. 5; Ro. x. 5; Ga. iii. 12. (12) sabbaths, Ex. xx. 8, xxxi. 13, xxxv. 2; De. v. 12. (13) polluted, Ex. xvi. 27. I said, *etc.*, comp. Nu. xiv. 29, xxvi. 65.

The Sabbath God's institution and gift to man (*v.* 12).—We observe—I. That the Sabbath is God's institution; the appointment is coeval with creation, obviously it was no Hebrew institution, kept in abeyance during the sojourn in Egypt, re-enacted by an express law, made additionally binding by words and example of our Lord. II. That the Sabbath is God's gift, man not made of iron, the body needs it, the mind needs it, above all the soul needs it. III. The ends for which the Sabbath was given. 1. To be a sign between a nation and Him; 2. To be the means of sanctifying a nation.[a]

Sabbath-breaking.—An Oriental legend tells us that while Solomon was on his way to pay a visit to the Queen of Sheba he came to a valley in which dwelt a peculiar tribe of monkeys. Upon inquiring into their history he learned that they were the posterity of a colony of Jews, who, settling in that region many years before, had, by habitually profaning the Sabbath, degenerated into the brutes he found them. This story though having no foundation in fact, nevertheless involves a truth, but it does not illustrate the whole truth as to the effects of Sabbath-breaking; for while in this world it sinks the human soul and body nearly to a level with brute life, in the world to come it sinks both to a perdition where to take the lowest place in the lowest rank of brute being would be an honour and a happiness which the despairing spirit will be denied the pleasure of hoping to enjoy, even to the latest futurity.

14—17. (14) name's sake, as *v.* 9. (15) not bring them, *i.e.* the very people who came out of Egypt: only their descendants entered Canaan. (16) he went, they hankered after the idolatries of Egypt, which seemed to them connected with plenty of food. (17) make an end, even in the judgments I brought upon them I remembered mercy.[a]

Legend of compassion.—One day, on going into the church, St. Giles found a poor sick man extended upon the pavement, and thereupon took off his mantle, and spread it over him; when the man was immediately healed. This and other miracles having attracted the veneration of the people, St. Giles fled from his country, and turned hermit: he wandered from one solitude to another until he came to a retired wilderness, near the mouth of

b "God's *name* means the sum total of His perfections; to manifest these, His gratuitous mercy abounding above their sins, yet without wrong to His justice, and so to set forth His glory, was and is the ultimate end of His dealings." —*Fausset.*

c *Dr. Dillon.*

v. 12. *Bp. D. Wilson*, 118.

a *J. D. Hull, M.A.*

v. 12. Though a few passages might be cited where the word "Sabbath" is perhaps used in a general sense, including the Sabbatical years, and other festivals, which were signs of the relations between Jehovah and His people, and distinguished them from the Gentiles around, yet there is here a particular reference to the seventh-day Sabbath, which stood *par excellence* in a different position from all the other celebrations.

a Ps. lxxviii. 38. "Compassion is an emotion of which we ought never to be ashamed. Graceful, particularly in youth, is the tear of sympathy, and the heart that melts at the tale of woe. We should not permit ease and indulgence to contract our affections, and

the Rhone, about twelve miles to the south of Nismes. Here he dwelt in a cave, by the side of a clear spring, living upon the herbs and fruits of the forest, and upon the milk of a hind which had taken up its abode with him. Now, it came to pass that the king of France (or, according to another legend, Wamba, king of the Goths) was hunting in the neighbourhood; and the hind, pursued by the dogs, fled to the cavern of the saint, and took refuge in his arms. The hunters let fly an arrow, and, following on the track, were surprised to find a venerable old man seated there, with the hind in his arms, which the arrow had pierced through his hand. Thereupon the king and his followers, perceiving that it was a holy man, prostrated themselves before him, and entreated forgiveness.[b]

18—22. (18) **their children**, when the fathers had fallen by the judgments in the wilderness. The Bk. of Deuteronomy contains these gracious Divine pleadings. (19, 20) **hallow**, or separate, keep holy.[a] (21) **the children rebelled**, trying in each fresh generation the patience of God. (22) **withdrew my hand**, from inflicting the meditated judgment.

The Sabbath (*v.* 20).—I. The design of the Sabbath. 1. An emblem of creation; 2. A memorial of redemption; 3. A covenant sign; 4. A foretaste of heaven. II. Its necessity. 1. Physical need; 2. Moral influence. III. Its duties. 1. To God; 2. To ourselves; 3. To our families; 4. To others.[b]

The Sabbath.—The Rev. Samuel Kilpin, on descending from the pulpit one Sabbath morning, was politely requested by a stranger to dine with him at an inn. He replied, "Dine with you, sir, at an inn in Exeter on a Sabbath-day! No, sir, not if you would give me the city. A minister who has to address souls, on subjects connected with eternity, dine at an inn with company on the Sabbath-day! No, sir, except from necessity, I never sit with my family, but at a short meal, on the Sabbath. I have to preach to myself as well as to others—excuse my firmness, I feel obliged by your kindness."[c]

23—26. (23) **scatter them**, Le. xxvi. 33; De. iv. 27, xxviii. 64. (24) **eyes . . idols**, *comp. v.* 16. (25) **statutes . . good**, better rend. *judgments*, as in second sentence. Reference is not to rules of life, or commands, but to Divine dealings as punishments. (26) **polluted . . gifts**,[a] *i.e.* by leaving them unrestrained to all the evil practices of their idolatry.

Ancient emperors.—From among the long list of those in power who, in the first ages of the Christian Church, persecuted the believers in Christ, and who were signally punished for their opposition to the truth, we may mention the following:—Nero was driven from his throne, and, perceiving himself in danger of death, became his own executioner; Domitian was killed by his own servants; Hadrian died of a distressing disease, which was accompanied with great mental agony: Severus never prospered in his affairs after he persecuted the Church, and was killed by the treachery of his son; Maximinus reigned but three years, and died a violent death: Decius was drowned in a marsh, and his body never found; Valerian was taken prisoner by the Persians, and, after enduring the horrors of captivity for several years, was flayed alive: Diocletian was compelled to resign his empire, and became insane; Maximianus Herculeus was deprived

wrap us up in a selfish enjoyment; but we should accustom ourselves to think of the distresses of human life, of the solitary cottage, the dying parent, and the weeping orphan. Nor ought we ever to sport with pain and distress in any of our amusements, or treat even the meanest insect with wanton cruelty."—*Blair.*

b Mrs. Jameson.

a "The pollution of the Sabbath consisted in failing to make the day holy in deed as well as in name by earnest worship and true heart service."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 20. *J. Mede*, i. 73.

v. 22. *T. Scott*, v. 445.

b W. W. Whythe.

c Whitecross.

a "I judicially gave them up to pollute themselves. Their own sin I made their punishment."—*Fausset.*

"God sometimes makes sin to be its own punishment, and yet He is not the author of sin; and there needs no more to make men miserable than to give them up to their own vile appetites and passions. Let them be put into the hand of their own counsels, and they will ruin themselves and make themselves desolate."—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 24. *W. Reading*, ii. 517.

b R. T. S.

a There is here a play upon the words, *Ba*, signifying "*go*," and *mah*, "*what*." Bamah, or, What go they to? Comp. Ex. xvi. 15.

"The name *Bamah* was a brand of the Divine displeasure, and a memorial of the people's guilt."—*Spk. Com.*

"Instead of the word *Misbeach*, the name which God appropriated to His own altar, the place is usually called Bamah, a name taken from an idolatrous custom."—*Lowth.*

v. 27. *W. Nind*, ii. 338.

b Whitecross.

a "Such was Israel's infatuated resolve. But God mercifully interposed to prevent its execution, by dispersing them, as He had mercifully delivered them from Egyptian idolatry, by bringing them into the wilderness." — *Wordsworth.*

v. 32. *R. H. Froude, Rem.* ii. 173; *J. Randall*, 382.

b Dr. Thomas.

a "I will no longer try to reclaim you by the gentle methods of patience and forbearance, but will govern

of his government, and strangled: Maximanus Galerius was suddenly and awfully removed by death; and Severus committed suicide. "The way of transgressors is hard."[b]

27—29. (27) **in this**, which the Prophet proceeds to state, viz., the defiling of the sacred land of covenant and promise with such self-willed idolatries. **blasphemed**, or grievously insulted. (28) **lifted . . hand**, or put forth My power. **provocation**, *etc.*, reference is to the meat-offering; see ch. xvi. 19. "Being offered to idols, it became abominable, and was turned into a provocation." **drink offerings**, Le. xxiii. 18. (29) **Bamah**, or *high place*. Ezekiel says the very name shows that it was not the place appointed by God.[a]

Justice in princes.—In the reign of Theodosius the emperor, a violent sedition arose at Antioch, because he had exacted a new kind of tribute from the people. In the heat of the commotion the populace broke down the statue of the Empress Placilla, who was lately dead. The emperor in a great rage sent forces against the city to sack it. When the herald came and told this to the citizens, one Macedonius, a wise monk, sent to the herald an answer after this manner: "Tell the emperor these words.—That he is not only an emperor, but also a man: therefore let him look not only on his empire, but also on himself; for he, being a man, commands also those who are men; let him not, then, use men so barbarously, who were made in the image of God. He is angry, and that justly, because the brazen image of his wife has been contumeliously used; and shall not the King of heaven be angry to see His glorious image in man contumeliously handled? O what a difference there is betwixt the reasonable soul and the brazen image! We, for this image, are able to set up a hundred: but he is not able to set up a single hair of these men again, if he kill them." These words being told the emperor, he suppressed his anger, and drew back his forces.[b]

30—32. (30) **are ye**, this appeal is addressed to the exiles. Notwithstanding all the warnings of men, they persisted in following the evil example of their fathers. "The particle of interrogation often implies a negative." (31) **offer . . gifts**, *v.* 26. **through the fire**, not merely as a symbol, but in fact burning them to death. It is singular to find this custom retained by the exiles. **inquired of**, *v.* 3. (32) **as the heathen**,[a] such a resolve indicated a repudiation of their rights and privileges as Jehovah's people.

The paganism of the heart (*v.* 32).—Look at it—I. As an evil to which the godly are liable. 1. The force of early habits; 2. Of social influence; 3. Of Satanic agency. II. As an evil against which the godly should struggle—1. By the growth of heavenly sentiments; 2. By closer fellowship with the Divine; 3. By a moral conquest over spiritual foes; 4. By a translation into the heavenly world.[b]

33—38. (33) **mighty**, *etc.*, **signs of judgment** and severe dealing.[a] (34) **the people**, better, *the peoples*; the various nations. (35) **wilderness**, here used figuratively to describe the time of exile, trial, and discipline, which should be to them what the wilderness-time had been to the people on their coming out of Egypt. (36, 37) **under the rod**,[b] a metaphor from the

shepherd, and meaning, to be gathered into the flock. Le. xxvii. 32.[c] The shepherd takes account of the condition of each sheep as the flock passes, one by one, under his rod. **bond**, or obligations and responsibilities. (38) **purge you**, *etc.*, "the election of the good involves the rejection of the bad."[d]

Conversion: in its commencement and progress (*v.* 37).—I. In its commencement God accomplishes it in a variety of ways. 1. By the dispensations of His providence; 2. By the conversion of some pious friend; 3. By the public ministry of the Word; 4. By the secret operation of His Spirit upon the soul. II. In its progress—1. He reveals that covenant to us; 2. He enables us to lay hold on it; 3. He confers upon us all the blessings. Remarks:—(1) How sovereign God is in the dispensations of His mercy; (2) How mysterious are His dealings with the children of men; (3) How you may best answer all the purposes of His grace.[e]

Passing under the rod.—It was the custom among the Jews to select the tenth of their sheep (see Le. xxvii. 32) after this manner. The lambs were separated from the dams, and enclosed in a sheep-cote with only one narrow way out. The dams were left immediately without. On opening the gate their young instantly hastened to join their mother, when a man, placed at the entrance, with a rod dipped in ochre, touched every tenth lamb, and so marked it with his rod, and said, "Let this be holy in the name of the tenth." The passage in Ezekiel, divested of its figurative form, appears to have this signification, that God would deliver a remnant of His people who were then in captivity in Babylon; that He would take particular notice of them, and count them one by one, as a shepherd does his sheep; and, marking them for His own peculiar service, bring them into the privileges of the covenant which He had made with them.[f]

39–44. (39) **go ye, serve**, this is evidently spoken in irony; indicating that God prefers the open idolater to the secret hypocrite. Be not half and half, naming My name, and serving your idols at the same time. (40) **holy mountain**, where God's temple was. **all of them**, both those of Judah and of Israel. **firstfruits**, or chief. (41) **be sanctified**, or honoured, Je. xxxiii. 9. (42) **know**, or fully experience and realise. (43) **remember**, call to mind, and on account of past doings humble yourselves in the dust. (44) **my name's sake**,[a] the supreme reason for the Divine action is the necessity for upholding, in the view of men, the Divine honour.

A sweet savour (*v.* 41).—1. Such are the merits of the Great Redeemer; 2. There was sweet savour in His active life; 3. So too in His passive obedience; 4. For the sake of these two things the Lord accepts us; 5. None can be accepted without Christ; but having received His merit, you cannot be unaccepted.[b]

45–49. (45) **moreover**, this is properly the beginning of a new prophecy, and so should have commenced ch. xxi. (46) **south**, so Judæa is situated in relation to the place where Ezekiel was in the north of Babylonia. **drop thy word**, De. xxxii. 2: Is. lv. 10.[a] **forest . . field**, fig. for land of Israel;[b] perhaps bec. the stately buildings of a city resemble the tall forest trees. (47) **fire**, fig. for the destruction wrought by the

you as masters do ill servants, by stripes and corrections, and by this means cure you of your hankering after the heathen customs and idolatries."—*Lowth.*

b "Lord, wave again Thy chastening rod, till every idol throne crumble to dust, and Thou, O God, reign in our hearts alone."—*Koble.*

c Je. xxxiii. 13.

d Ro. xi. 7–11.

v. 35. *B. Beddome*, ii. 30; *H. B. Wilson*, 317.

e *C. Simeon, M.A.*

f *Visitor.*

a "His reasons were all fetched from Himself. Had He dealt with them 'according to their wicked ways and corrupt doings,' He would have left them to be scattered and lost, but He recovered and restored them for the sake of His own name, not only that it might not be polluted, but that He might be sanctified in them before the heathen."—*Mat. Henry.*

b *Dr. Thomas.*

a "The gift of prophecy is compared to rain, or the dew of heaven, which makes everything fruitful. Such is the benefit of sound doctrine wherever it is received."—*Lowth.*

Chaldæans. all faces, or all the surface of the country. (48) not . . quenched, until its full mission of destruction is wrought out. (49) parables, or in metaphors wh. we cannot understand.[c]

Preachers (*v.* 49).—I. The charge brought against the preachers of the Gospel. 1. That they preach what is unreal; 2. What is unintelligible: 3. What is allegorical. II. Some of the statements of preachers of the Gospel on which this charge against them is founded. 1. Those which relate to the natural condition of mankind: 2. To the evidences of conversion; 3. To the happiness of religion; 4. To the future punishment of the finally impenitent.[d]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

1—5. (1, 2) Jerusalem, comp. *south*, ch. xx. 46. holy places, *i.e.* the temple and its surrounding buildings. (3) my sword, wh. is the king of Babylon. righteous, *etc.*, in a general calamity wh. would affect all classes. Comp. ch. xx. 47.[a] (4) south . . north, *i.e.* from one end of the land to the other.[b] (5) not return, *i.e.* into its sheath until its mission is accomplished.

Pretty preaching.—I am tormented with the desire of writing better than I can. I am tormented, say I, with the desire of preaching better than I can. But I have no wish to make fine, pretty sermons. Prettiness is well enough when prettiness is in place. I like to see a pretty child, a pretty flower: but in sermons prettiness is out of place. To my ear it should be anything but commendation, should it be said to me, "You have given us a pretty sermon." If I were put upon trial for my life, and my advocate should amuse the jury with tropes and figures, or bury his arguments beneath a profusion of flowers of his rhetoric, I would say to him, "Tut, man, you care more for your vanity than for my hanging. Put yourself in my place, speak in view of the gallows, and you will tell your story plainly and earnestly." I have no objections to a lady winding a sword with ribbons, and studding it with roses as she presents it to her hero-lover; but in the day of battle he will tear away the ornaments, and use the naked edge on the enemy.[e]

6, 7. (6) sigh, *i.e.* give public indication of your intense grief and concern. breaking . . loins, as if utterly bowed down by the weight of troubles. "The loins are the seat of strength."[a] The breaking of the loins is a fig. for the utter prostration of the strength. (7) tidings, of the peril and woe of Jerusalem. melt, *etc.*, ch. vii. 17.

Crying in the wrong place.—I remember (says Foster, in speaking of Robert Hall), at the distance of many years, with what vividness of the ludicrous he related an anecdote of a preacher long since deceased, of some account in his day and connection. He would, in preaching, sometimes weep, or seem to weep, when the people wondered why, as not perceiving in what he was saying any cause for such emotion in the exact places where it occurred. After his death one of his hearers, happening to inspect some of his manuscript sermons, exclaimed,

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b "Judah and Jerusalem are called forests, not only bec. they had been full of people, as a wood of trees, but bec. they had been empty of fruit, for fruit trees grow not in a forest. Those that should have been as the garden of the Lord had become like a forest."—*Mat. Henry.*

c Mat. xiii. 14, 15.

d *G. Brooks.*

a "The Prophet is not now touching the question as to the extent to which the righteous suffer with the wicked. That, as a matter of fact, national judgment involves the innocent in the temporal ruin of the guilty, there is no doubt. The equity of God is vindicated by the ruin being only *temporal*."—*Spk. Com.*

b Eze. xx. 47.

vv. 1, 2. *Dr. T. Horton*, 400.

c *R. Hall.*

a Job xl. 16; Ps. lxvi. 11, lxix.; Is. xxi. 3.

"Now what a sullen-blooded fool was this, at sulks with earth and heaven! Could he not outweep his passion like a blustering day and be clear-skied thereafter?"—*A. Smith.*

"In man or woman, but far most in man, and most of all in man that minis-

"I have found the explanation; we used to wonder at the good doctor's weeping with so little reason sometimes as it seemed. In his sermons there is written here and there on the margins, 'Cry here.' Now I really believe the doctor sometimes mistook the place, and that was the cause of what appeared so unaccountable."

8—13. (8, 9) a sword, *v.* 2.[a] furbished,[b] or brightened. made every way ready for immediate war. (10) glitter, and to excite alarm. contemneth, *etc.*, trans. "The sceptre of my son contemneth all wood."[c] (11) handled, and put at once to its use. (12) cry and howl, *comp.* the sighing of the Prophet, as a looker on, with the howling of those who actually suffered. smite . . thigh, one of the natural expressions of exceeding distress. (13) trial, or time of trial. the rod, or sceptre. Here a fig. for the prince, then reigning, who was of David's house.[d]

Two preachers—Rev. G. Whitefield.—When visiting America the Rev. G. Whitefield often stood on the outside steps of the court-house in Philadelphia, and preached to thousands who crowded the streets below. On one of these occasions a youth pressed as near to his favourite preacher as possible; and, to testify his respect, held a lantern for his accommodation. Soon after the sermon began, he became so absorbed in the subject, that the lantern fell from his hand, and was dashed to pieces; and that part of the audience in the immediate vicinity of the speaker's station were not a little discomposed by the occurrence. Some years after, Mr. Whitefield, in the course of his fifth visit to America, about the year 1754, on a journey from the southward, called at St. George's, in Delaware, where Mr. Rodgers was then settled in the ministry, and spent some time with him. In the course of this visit, Mr. Rodgers, riding one day with his visitor in a close carriage, asked him whether he recollected the occurrence of the little boy who was so much affected with his preaching as to let the lantern fall. Mr. Whitefield answered, "Oh yes! I remember it well, and have often thought I would give anything in my power to know who that little boy was, and what had become of him." Mr. Rodgers replied with a smile, "I am that little boy." Mr. Whitefield, with tears of joy, started from his seat, clasped him in his arms, and with strong emotions remarked that he was the fourteenth person then in the ministry whom he had discovered in the course of that visit to America, of whose hopeful conversion he had been the instrument.[e]—*Dr. Staunton.*—Dr. Staunton was called the searching preacher. Once, when preaching at Warborough, near Oxford, a man was so much affected with his first prayer, that he ran home and desired his wife to get ready and come to church, for there was one in the pulpit who prayed like an angel. The woman hastened away and heard the sermon, which, under the Divine blessing, was the means of her conversion, and she afterwards proved an eminent Christian.[f]

14—17. (14) third time, to express the violence of the threatening judgment. Let its stroke be repeated again and again. "Doubled" means "multiplied," or "repeated." sword . . slain, or by which many are slain. privy chambers, indicating the "sack" of the city. (15) point, or "whirling

ters and serves the altar, in my soul I loathe all affectation; 'tis my perfect scorn; object of my implacable disgust."—*Cowper.*

a De. xxxii. 41.

"The faithful servant of God saw God arming Himself as a mighty man for the war, and the glittering sword of vengeance in His hand, and he calls aloud to his countrymen all at ease, with awakening thunders, 'A sword,' etc."—*McCheyne.*

b Fr. *fourbir*; It. *forbire*; Ger. *furbau*, to cleanse.

c Revised English Bible.

"The trees of Judah might be consumed; but they imagined that the rod, or sceptre, in the hands of the King of Judah, whom they, adopting God's words, call His *Son*, would be indestructible."—*Wordsworth.*

d "What horrors will not arise when the sword shall cut down, without regard, the ruling sceptre o Judah?"—*Karlsruhe Trans. of Bible.*

vv. 9, 10. *J. H. B. Mountain*, 345; *R. M. McCheyne, Rem.* 316; *R. A. Suckling*, 315.

e R. T. S.

f Whitecross.

"If you always live with those who are lame, you will yourself learn to limp."—*From the Latin.*

glance of the sword:"[a] naked, bared, sword.[b] ruins, *lit.* "stumbling-blocks." wrapped,[c] or *drawn*; "prepared to flash forth, drawn for slaughter;" sharpened.[d] (16) go .. hand, "Unite thy forces on the right hand."[e] (17) smite hands, as an expression of indignation.

"*Smite thy hands together.*"—To smite the hands together, in the East, amounts to an oath! In the seventeenth verse, the Lord says, in reference to Jerusalem, "I will also smite My hands together, and I will cause My fury to rest: I the Lord have said." By the solemn smiting of hands it was shown the word had gone forth, and would not be recalled. When a priest delivers a message to the people, when he relates anything which he professes to have received from the gods, he smites his hands together, and says, "True." Does a Pandarum, or other kind of religious mendicant, consider himself to be insulted, he smites his hands against the individuals, and pronounces his imprecations upon them, crying aloud, "True, true, it will all come upon you." Should a person, when speaking of anything which is certain to happen, be doubted by others, he will immediately smite his hands. "Have you heard that Muttoo has been killed by a tiger?" "No! nor do I believe it." The relater will then (if true) smite together his hands, which at once confirms the fact. "Those men cannot escape for any great length of time, because the king has smitten his hands;" meaning, he has sworn to have them taken. Jehovah did smite His hands together against Jerusalem.[f]

18—20. (18, 19) two ways, these were to be marked, as on a map—one leading to Jerusalem, the other to Ammon. (20) to Rabbath, *etc.*, it seems that Zedekiah invited the Ammonites to an alliance in opposition to the Chaldæans:[a] this, however, would only draw down destruction on both.

Ways of God mysterious.—God hath ways and judgments which man cannot reach unto. Some of His ways are acted, as we say, above board: they are done in a clear light: he that runs may see and read them, and God in them; he that runs may read love written upon some of them in letters of gold, or with beams of light. And he that runs may read wrath written upon others of them in letters of blood, or with streams of darkness, and the very shadows of death; but some ways of God are so curtained about and veiled, so hidden and obscured, that we cannot perceive them. Though all the ways of God are ways of light, yet many of them are in the dark to man. "O how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."[b]

21—24. (21) parting .. way, *i.e.* where the roads divided, one leading to Ammon, and one to Jerusalem. He was uncertain which to attack first. divination, "the common word for any kind of superstitious omen."[a] arrows bright, or he shook his arrows.[b] images, or teraphim.[c] looked .. liver, or entrails of animals offered for sacrifice. Particular appearances, wh. were really due to the animal's freedom fr. disease, were regarded as hopeful. (22) for Jerusalem, *i.e.* to settle whether he should go first to Jerusalem. appoint .. rams, ch. iv. 2. (23) unto them, *i.e.* to the Jews. sworn oaths, of fealty to Babylon Prob. Nebuc.'s anger at their unfaithfulness decided

a Fairbairn.

b Henderson.

c "In its scabbard, that the edge may not be blunt when it is presently drawn forth to strike."—*Fausset.*

d Gesenius.

e Grotius.

"Brace thyself together; string together all thy nerves; concentrate all thy force. God addresses the sword, and gives it a commission to go forth as a mighty man, or as a powerful army with all its forces nerved together against Jerusalem."—*Wordsworth.*

f Roberts.

a Je. xxvii. 2, 3. For *Rabbah* or *Rabbath*, see 2 Sa. xii. 26; Je. xlix. 2; Ezc. xxv. 5.

Submission to God implies that we justify Him in everything that He does—that we approve all that God does—that we cleave to God in the midst of all.

b Job Caryl.

a Nu. xxiii. 23.

b "The Chaldæans marked upon the arrows the names of the places they had in view, or the alternatives they submitted to this determination. They then drew the arrows from the quiver at a venture, and the

his going first to Jerus. (24) taken . . hand, or fall into the hands of the Bab. king.

Divination by arrows.—"He made his arrows bright." This was for the purpose of divination. Jerome on this passage says that "the manner of divining by arrows was thus: They wrote on several arrows the names of the cities they intended to make war against, and then putting them promiscuously all together into a quiver, they caused them to be drawn out in the manner of lots, and that city whose name was on the arrow first drawn out, was the first they assaulted." A method of this sort of divination, different from the former, is worth noticing. Della Valle says: "I saw at Aleppo a Mohammedan, who caused two persons to sit upon the ground, one opposite to the other, and gave them four arrows into their hands, which both of them held with their points downward, and as it were in two right lines united one to the other. Then, a question being put to him about any business, he fell to murmur his enchantments, and thereby caused the said four arrows of their own accord to unite their points together in the midst (though he that held them stirred not his hand), and, according to the future event of the matter, those of the right side were placed over those of the left, or on the contrary." This practice the writer refers to diabolical influence. The method of divination practised by some of the idolatrous Arabs, but which is prohibited by the Koran, is too singular to be unnoticed. "The arrows used by them for this purpose were like those with which they cast lots, being without heads or feathers, and were kept in the temple of some idol, in whose presence they were consulted. Seven such arrows were kept at the temple of Mecca; but generally in divination they make use of three only, on one of which was written, My Lord hath commanded me; on another, My Lord hath forbidden me; and the third was blank. If the first was drawn, they looked on it as an approbation of the enterprise in question; if the second, they made a contrary conclusion: but if the third happened to be drawn, they mixed them, and drew over again, till a decisive answer was given by one of the others. These divining arrows were generally consulted before anything of moment was undertaken, as when a man was about to marry, or about to go a journey, or the like."[d]

25—27. (25) profane, wicked, we should say *profanely*. The word used, however, means "pierced through."[a] (26) diadem, for he shall no longer be king. (27) overturn, *etc.*, repeated to increase the solemnity. whose right it is, *comp.* Ge. xlix. 10. There can be no full and satisfactory reference of this expression save to Messiah.

Crowns (*v.* 26).—I. Some of the crowns that will at death be taken off,—of wealth, of nobility, etc. II. Some of the crowns that will not be taken off,—of character, of life, etc.—*Social changes subservient to the kingdom of Christ* (*v.* 27).—I. Join in a protest against the passion for mere change and commotion. II. There are things that a good man will wish might be overturned. 1. False, pernicious religion; 2. Military despotisms; 3. Etc., etc.[b]

28—32. (28) Ammonites, *v.* 20. reproach, or scorning of Judah. (29) see vanity, or indulge false confidences of their

one that first came forth with one of the marks upon it, was regarded not only as supplying the response required, but as manifesting the will of the gods, and as conveying an assurance of success in the enterprise in view."—*Kitto.*

"The method of obtaining an omen, by shaking lots together in a helmet, was familiar to the ancient Greeks."—*Spk. Com.*

c Ge. xxxi. 19.

v. 22. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 653.

It does not suppose insensibility to the afflictions under which we are called to cultivate it. It does not suppose that we are not to employ the means which are within our power, with a view to the prevention of evil. Nor is prayer to God against evil inconsistent with submission to Him under it.

d Burder.

a "To Ezekiel's idealising view Zedekiah was the grand victim 'pierced through' by God's sword of judgments, as his sons were slain before his eyes, which were then put out, and he was led a captive in chains to Babylon."—*Fausset.*

v. 26. *W. A. Butler*, ii. 100.

b J. Foster.

security. upon the necks, *i.e.* casting thy slain in heaps. have an end, or reach its doom. (30) shall . . sheath? *re.* 4, 5. in the place, *i.e.* thou shalt be destroyed in thy land, not carried captive. (31) blow . . wrath,[a] *see* ch. xxii. 20—22. brutish, or burning. (32) no more remembered, ch. xxv. 10. They should, as a nation, be consigned to oblivion.[b]

Ammon.—It was prophesied concerning Ammon, "Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them. I will make Rabbah of the Ammonites a stable for camels, and a couching-place for flocks. Behold, I will stretch out My hand upon thee, and deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; I will cut thee off from the people, and cause thee to perish out of the countries; I will destroy thee. The Ammonites shall not be remembered among the nations. Rabbah, the chief city of the Ammonites, shall be a desolate heap. Ammon shall be a perpetual desolation." "Ammon was to be delivered to be a spoil to the heathen—to be destroyed, and to be a perpetual desolation." "All this country, formerly so populous and flourishing, is now changed into a vast desert." Ruins are seen in every direction. The country is divided between the Turks and the Arabs, but chiefly possessed by the latter. The extortions of the one and the depredations of the other, keep it in perpetual desolation, and make it a spoil to the heathen. "The far greater part of the country is uninhabited, being abandoned to the wandering Arabs, and the towns and villages are in a state of total ruin." "At every step are to be found the vestiges of ancient cities, the remains of many temples, public edifices, and Greek churches." The cities are desolate. "Many of the ruins present no object of any interest. They consist of a few walls of dwelling-houses, heaps of stones, the foundations of some public edifices, and a few cisterns filled up; there is nothing entire, but it appears that the mode of building was very solid, all the remains being formed of large stones. In the vicinity of Ammon there is a fertile plain interspersed with low hills, which, for the greater part, are covered with ruins."

a An image taken from the smelting of metals.

b "Justly is their name blotted out who would have Israel's name for ever lost."—*Mat. Henry.*

"Superstition is a word so often used, that the evil which it designates has passed for innocent and playful aberrations of ignorance. Were I to attempt its description, I would say that superstition is the restless effort of a guilty but blind conscience to find rest, and peace, and good, by unauthorised propitiations and ceremonies; and the horrid nature of these propitiations, and the multitude of these ceremonies, equally prove the strong feeling of distress in the soul, and the inefficiency of the means used to remove it."—*R. Watson.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

1—4. (1, 2) judge, or pronounce judgment on. Comp. ch. xx. 4, xxiii. 36. bloody city, *lit.* "city of bloods."[a] show her, or make her to know. (3) time may come, ch. vii. 7.[b] (4) unto thy years, *i.e.* thy years of visitation and judgments. "Thou hast filled up the measure of thine iniquities, and brought the time of vengeance upon thyself."[c] reproach, *etc.*, De. xxviii. 37.

Sudden judgment.—A sad catastrophe befell the town of Pieurs, in Italy, in the year 1618. It was situated beneath Mount Conto, and on the very site of a buried town, whose fate might have given forewarning. A gay, laughter-loving, thoughtless little town it was; and as the sun set on the 4th of September, the people lay down to rest, or pursued their festivities far into the night, without a dream of danger: but in the darkness of that night Mount Conto fell and destroyed them all. A great roar was heard far over the country; a shock felt, as of an earthquake,

a 2 Ki. xxi. 16; Eze. xxiii. 37, 45, xxiv. 6, 9.

b "Instead of deriving advantage from her bloody sacrifice to idols, she only thereby brought on herself the time of herpunishment."—*Fausset.*

c *Lowth.*

The most agreeable of all companions is a simple, frank man, without any high pretensions to an

and then a solemn stillness followed. In the morning, a cloud of dust and vapour hung over the valley, and the bed of the river was dry. All the excavations that have been made have failed to discover a single vestige of the inhabitants or their dwellings. The cathedral, with its gold and jewels, the churches, houses, and hovels, the priests, peasants, and nobles, there lie at rest till the great day. In such a fearful ruin shall those perish who, having lived under the very shadow of Christ's salvation all their lives, receive at last the heavy doom of those who, having had the offer, have yet "rejected so great salvation."[d]

5–8. (5) those, *i.e.* those countries.[a] infamous, or defiled in name. (6) princes, including the king's family, and the chief officers. to their power, or up to the measure of their ability, each was guilty of violence and bloodshed.[b] (7) light . . mother, so transgressing the foundation-law of social morality.[c] stranger, who should have been the object of kindly hospitality and charity. (8) holy things, those connected with sacred worship.

Brutus.—President Davis, in his sermons, remarks:—How astonishing was the rigid justice of Brutus the elder, who, in spite of all the passions of a father, passed sentence of death upon his own sons for conspiring against the liberty of their country. While these youths stood trembling and weeping before him, and hoping their tears would be the most powerful defence with a father; while the senate whispered for the moderation of the punishment, and that they might escape with banishment; while his fellow consul was silent; while the multitude trembled, and expected the decision with horror; the inexorable Brutus rose, in all the stern majesty of justice, and turning to the lictors, who were the executioners, said to them, "To you, lictors, I deliver them." In this sentence he persisted, inexorable, notwithstanding the weeping intercession of the multitude, and the cries of the young men, calling upon their father by the most endearing names. The lictors seized them, stripped them naked, bound their hands behind them, beat them with rods, and then struck off their heads; the inexorable Brutus looking on the bloody spectacle with unaltered countenance. Thus the father was lost in the judge; the love of justice overcame all the fondness of the parent: private interest was swallowed up in regard for the public good and the honour and security of government. This, perhaps, is the most striking resemblance of the justice of Deity that can be found in the history of mankind. But how far short does it fall! How trifling were the sufferings of these youths compared with those of the Son of God! They, too, were criminals; He was holy and free from sin. How insignificant the law and government for which they suffered, to that of the Divine! How small the good of the public in the one case to that of the other![d]

9–12. (9) carry tales, to slander others; or to bear false witness so as to bring others into judgment.[a] (10) in thee, *etc.*, comp. ch. xviii. 6. (11) committed abomination, reference is to sins related to the social and moral relationships, which are carefully defined in the laws of Moses. (12) taken gifts, *etc.*, Ex. xxiii. 8; De. xvi. 19.

Extortion (*v.* 12).—There is surely no part of the world worse oppressive greatness; one who loves life, and understands the use of it; obliging alike at all hours; above all, of a golden temper, and stedfast as an anchor. For such a one we gladly exchange the greatest genius, the most brilliant wit, the profoundest thinker. *d Cheever.*

a Eze. xvi. 57.
b Eze. ix. 9, xvi. 38, xxiii. 37, 45.
c De. xxvii. 16.
"When the brave man gives his shattered arm to the surgeon's knife, will may prevent even the quiver of an eyelid; but no will and no courage can reverse his sensations, or prevent the operation from inflicting pain. When the heart is raw, and smarting from recent bereavement, let there be the deepest and most reverential submission to the highest will, is it possible not to wince? Can any cant demand for submission extort the profession that pain is pleasure?" — *F. W. Robertson.*
"He who comes from the kitchen smells of its smoke; he who adheres to a sect has something of its cant; the college air pursues the student."— *Lavater.*
d R. T. S.

a Le. xix. 16.

than the East for usury and extortion. A rich man will think nothing of demanding twenty per cent. for his precious loan. Does a person wish to buy or sell an article: does he want to avoid any office or duty, or to gain a situation, or place any person under an obligation: he cannot think of doing the one or the other, without giving himself into the hands of the extortioner.[b]

[b] *Roberts.*

13—16. (13) smitten my hand, as an expression of my indignation.[a] (14) can, *etc.*, ch. xxi. 7. (15) consume, by the fires of national calamity. (16) shall take, better, "Thou shalt be profaned by thyself in the sight of the heathen."[b] "No longer enjoy the privileges of a city called by My name."

[a] Eze. xxi. 14, 17.

[b] "Thou shalt by thine own fault forfeit the privileges of a holy nation."—*Spk. Com.*

Lord Chief Baron Smythe.—In the year 1772, says a respectable writer, I spent the summer in London, and being upon a visit to a family at Ware, in Hertfordshire, we one day went to Hertford, it being the summer assizes. Lord Chief Baron Smythe presided on the bench, whom I had heard much of as being a godly and spiritual man, as well as an upright and judicious judge. The first day he sat at *nisi prius*, and I thought him very sensible and knowing, or, what the lawyers call, learned in his profession: but the next morning he had to try three criminals; I forget the offences, but they were all capital, and the prisoners were tried separately, and found guilty. The venerable judge, in passing the sentence of the law upon them, was very solemn. He stated to them separately the aggravation of the particular crime of each, and the necessity that the laws of the country, and the security of the people, should be maintained by the punishment of the offenders, "which punishment," he added, "I am now to denounce upon you. This it is painful for me to do, but it is a duty imposed upon me by my office to pronounce—That you be taken from hence to the place from whence you came," etc. His subsequent address affected the audience, however it might the criminals. "Prisoners! so we see that the law worketh wrath against transgressors, and the Divine law on us and all mankind as sinners, who have come short of the glory of God. But God, who is rich in mercy, hath provided a glorious salvation, in which you and I may find abundant relief. He sent His own Son to seek and save the lost, and to give Himself a sacrifice for sin, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin. I am a sinner like you; but, pleading that blood, I found mercy; and therefore recommend that blood to you. Go ye, and do likewise."[c]

[c] *R. T. S.*

17—22. (17, 18) dross, *comp.* Is. i. 25; Mal. iii. 3.[a] (19, 20) midst of the furnace, Jerusalem would be like the furnace for the purifying away of the national dross. (21) blow upon you, to raise high the heat. (22) my fury, or Divine vengeance, which is like a purifying fire.

[a] Also Isa. iv. 4; Je. vi. 29; Zec. xiii. 9.

Hypocrisy.—The shops in the square of San Marco were all religiously closed, for the day was a high festival: we were much disappointed, for it was our last day, and we desired to take away with us some souvenirs of lovely Venice; but our regret soon vanished, for on looking at the shop we meant to patronise, we readily discovered signs of traffic within. We stepped to the side door, and found, when one or two other customers had been served,

vv. 17—19. *C. Benson, Huls. Lec.* 335; *Dr. Owen*, xvii. 493. "Great vices are the proper objects of our detestation, smaller faults of our pity; but affectation appears to be the only true

v. 14. *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 78.

"I warn every aspirant for wealth against the infernal canker of selfishness. It will eat out the heart with the fire of hell, or bake it harder than a stone. The heart of avaricious old age stands like a bare rock in a bleak wilderness, and there is no rod of authority, nor incantation of pleasure, which can draw from it one crystal drop to quench the raging thirst for satisfaction."—*Beecher.*

that we might purchase to our heart's content, saint or no saint. After this fashion, too, many keep the laws of God to the eye, but violate them in the heart. The shutters are up as if the man no more dealt with sin and Satan; but a brisk commerce is going on behind the scenes. From such deceit may the Spirit of truth preserve us.[b]

23—26. (23, 24) rained upon, Is. v. 6; Am. iv. 7. Temporal and spiritual blessings are withheld from the rebellious land. (25) prophets, *i.e.* the false prophets, who agreed to encourage the people to resist the Bab. king, by wicked assurances and promises. devoured souls, by their deceits. taken the treasure, making gain of their evil prophesyings. (26) violated, or offered violence to, by misinterpreting it.[a]

Hypocrisy easy, but dangerous.—The counterfeit will always have some admirers, from its cheapness in the market. One must dig deep in dark mines for gold and silver; the precious treasure must be brought from far across the seas; it must be melted down; it must pass through many assays, and the dies must be worked with ponderous engines before the coin can be produced; all this to the sluggish many is a heavy disadvantage. Hush! hearken! steal silently upstairs; the spirit of Deceit invites you to her chamber; a little plaster of Paris, a fire, a crucible, molten lead, the mould, and there is your money, sir, without troubling Peru, Potosi, California, or the Mint. Slink out and change your fine new shillings, and your fortune's made without the ignoble waste of sweat and labour. But be quiet, for a detective may be near, a coarse-minded minion of unpoetic law, who may cruelly block up your road, or even lead you into prison. Short cuts to wealth have brought many to the hulks: and, let me add, there are short cuts to godliness which have brought many to perdition![b]

27—31. (27) princes, *etc.*, Mic. iii. 11; Zep. iii. 3. (28) untempered mortar, ch. xiii. 10. (29) oppression, or deceit. (30) hedge, or wall. gap, or breach, Ps. cvi. 23. "This was a proof of the general corruption, that there was among them no faithful servant to stand in the gap, and build up the hedge."[a]

Stand in the gate (*v.* 30).—A man having lost all his children, and in complaining of his forlorn condition, says, "Alas! I have not any one to stand in the gate; my enemies can now enter when they please to tear and devour me." "In the gate, in the gate, no one stands."[b]

source of the ridiculous."—*Fielding.*
b Spurgeon.

a Le. x. 10.
v. 24. *Alexander Shanks*, 280 *ff.*
"The kite is a bird which delights in the free air, and soars aloft, as if it would fain approach to heaven. All the while, however, it keeps its sharp eye continually directed to the earth, if haply it may there spy some prey to seize. And like it are hypocrites; they love to speak of heavenly and spiritual things; they go to church and take the holy supper; they read, and pray, and sing; but, nevertheless, their heart retains its earthly inclination, and they seek that which is temporal more than that which is eternal."—*Gotthold.*
b Spurgeon.

a Spk. Com.

b Roberts.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

1—4. (1, 2) two women, *viz.* Samaria and Jerusalem.[a] Israel and Judah were branches of the same stock. (3) in Egypt, ch. xvi. 7, xx. 8. (4) Aholah, meaning, "Her tent or tabernacle," and applied to Samaria, which had a temple and worship, but not Jehovah's. Aholibah, denotes, "My tabernacle is in her." It is applied to Jerusalem.

A virtuous woman.—

Thou asketh what hath changed my heart,
And where hath fled my youthful folly?
I tell thee, Tamar's virtuous art
Hath made my spirit holy.

a Je. iii. 7, 8, 10.
"Continency is that moral virtue by which we restrain concupiscence. There is this distinction between chastity and continency: chastity requires no effort, because it may result from constitution, whereas

Her eye—as soft and blue as even,
When day and night are calmly meeting—
Beams on my heart like light from heaven,
And purifies its beating.

The accents fall from Tamar's lip
Like dewdrops from the rose-leaf dripping,
When honey-bees all crowd to sip,
And cannot cease their sipping.

The shadowy blush that tints her cheek,
For ever coming, ever going,
May well the spotless fount bespeak
That sets the stream aflowing.

Her song comes o'er my thrilling breast,
E'en like the harp-string's holiest measures,
When dreams the soul of lands of rest
And everlasting pleasures.

Then ask not what hath changed my heart,
Or where hath fled my youthful folly—
I tell thee, Tamar's virtuous art
Hath made my spirit holy.[b]

5—8. (5) when . . mine, while she was mine: before the days when the separate worship was set up. doted . . lovers, *i.e.* her foreign alliances. (6) blue, or purple. Garments dyed with the expensive purple dye. horses,[a] these were scarce in Judæa. (7) defiled herself, her idolatry being figured as spiritual immorality. (8) left she, but added new idolatries to those brought from Egypt.

Blue.—Blue was a sky colour in great esteem among the Jews, and other Oriental nations. The robe of the ephod, in the gorgeous dress of the high priest, was made all of blue: it was a prominent colour in the sumptuous hangings of the tabernacle; and the whole people of Israel were required to put a fringe of blue upon the border of their garments, and on the fringe a riband of the same colour. The palace of Ahasuerus, the king of Persia, was furnished with curtains of this colour, on a pavement of red, and blue, and white marble: a proof it was not less esteemed in Persia than on the Jordan. And from Ezekiel we learn that the Assyrian nobles were habited in robes of this colour: "She doted on the Assyrians, her neighbours, which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men." It is one of the most remarkable vicissitudes in the customs of the East, that this beautiful colour, for many ages associated in their minds with everything splendid, elegant, and rich, should have gradually sunk in public estimation, till it became connected with the ideas of meanness and vulgarity, and confined to the dress of the poor and the needy. In modern times, the whole dress of an Arabian female of low station consists of drawers, and a very large shift, both of blue linen, ornamented with some needlework of a different colour. And if credit may be given to Thevenot, the Arabs between Egypt and Mount Sinai, who lead a most wretched life, are clothed in a long blue shirt. To solve this difficulty, Mr. Harmer supposes that "the art of dying blue was discovered in countries more to the east or south than Tyre; and that the dye was by no means

continency appears to be the consequence of a victory gained over ourselves. The term is most usually applied to men; as chastity is to women." —*C. Buck.*

"Paltry affectation, strained allusions, and disgusting finery, are easily attained by those who choose to wear them; they are but too frequently the bulges of ignorance or of stupidity, whenever it would endeavour to please." —*Goldsmith.*

b *William Knox.*

a "Not like the humbler natives, riding on mules, asses, or camels." —*Wordsworth.*

"When that monster-taming Hercules overcame all in the Olympics, Jupiter at last, in an unknown shape, wrestled with him: the victory was uncertain, till at length Jupiter deserted himself, and Hercules yielded. No striving with supreme powers: we must submit ourselves unto the mighty hand of God, acknowledge our offences, call to Him for mercy. If He strike, as it is with them that are wounded with the spear of Achilles, He alone must help."—*Burton.*

"Affectation in any part of our carriage, is lighting up a candle to our defects, and never fails

become common in the days of Ezekiel, though some that were employed in the construction of the tabernacle, and some of the Tyrians in the time of Solomon, seem to have possessed the art of dying with blue. These blue cloths were manufactured in remote countries; and to them that wore scarcely anything but woollens and linens of the natural colour, these blue calicoes formed very magnificent vestments. It does not appear, however, that the Jews ever wore garments wholly of this colour; and perhaps they abstained from it as sacred and mysterious, than which none was more used about the tabernacle and the temple, in the curtains, veils, and vestments, belonging to these sacred edifices."[b]

to make us be taken notice of, either as wanting sense or wanting sincerity."—*Locke.*

b Paxton.

9–12. (9) **hand . . Assyrians,** 2 Ki. xvii. 23.[a] (10) **nakedness,** those carried into captivity were usually stripped bare. **famous,** or infamous. A byword among women. Spoken of as a striking example of the judgments that came upon the idolatrous.[b] (11) **sister Aholibah,** *v.* 4. **inordinate love,** passionate and wilful service of the idols. (12) **doted . . neighbours,** Ahaz began the alliance with Assyria, and encouraged the adoption of the Assyrian idolatries.[c] **horsemen,** *v.* 6.

Spirit of a bitter love.—
By pride
Angels have fallen ere thy time: by pride—
That sole alloy of thy most lovely mould—
The evil spirit of a bitter love,
And a revengeful heart, had power upon thee.
From my first years, my soul was filled with thee
I saw thee midst the flowers the lowly boy
Tended, unmarked by thee—a spirit of bloom,
And joy, and freshness, as if Spring itself
Were made a living thing, and wore thy shape!
I saw thee, and the passionate heart of man
Enter'd the breast of the wild-dreaming boy;
And from that hour I grew—what to the last
I shall be—thine adorer! Well, thir love,
Vain, frantic, guilty, if thou wilt, became
A fountain of ambition and bright hope;
I thought of tales that by the winter hearth
Old gossips tell—how maidens sprung from kings
Have stoop'd from their high sphere; how Love, like Death,
Levels all ranks, and lays the shepherd's crook
Beside the sceptre. Thus I made my home
In the soft palace of a fairy future![d]

a "God made these very Assyrians the executioners of His judgments upon the ten tribes: many of them being carried away by Pul, 1 Chr. v. 25, 26; afterward by Tiglath-Pileser, 2 Ki. xv. 29; and at length the whole country was subdued and depopulated by Shalmaneser, 2 Ki. xvii. 6."—*Lowth.*

b "'The report of her infamy went abroad to all women,' *i.e.* to all provinces."—*Kimchi.*

c 2 Ki. xvi. 7, 11; 2 Chr. xxviii. 16–23; Isa. vii. 20, lvii. 9.

d E. B. Lytton.

13–17. (13) **defiled,** in heart and purpose. **one way,** and that a bad way. "Both alike forsaking God for heathen confidences." (14) **men pourtrayed,** pictures, or bas-reliefs, representing deified heroes. **vermilion,** or red ochre.[a] Vermilion seems to have been the peculiar colour of the Chaldæans, as purple was of the Assyrians. (15) **girdles,** these were the mark of dignity, and to this part of the dress much care was given. **dyed attire,** or "in ample dyed turbans:" lofty and richly adorned head-dresses. (16) **doted,** this word indicates a kind of love that is merely passionate and foolish. (17) **alienated,** *i.e.* she soon grew weary of the alliance, and turned from Babylon to Egypt.[b]

a "In striking agreement with this *v.* is the fact that the Assyrian sculptures lately discovered have painted and coloured bas-reliefs, red, blue, and black."—*Fausset.*

b 2 Ki. xxiv. 7; Je. xxxvii. 5, 7.

"All affectation is vain and ridiculous; it is the attempt of poverty to appear rich."—*Lavater.*

Vermilion.—The nature of those images, and the practices, may be seen from the context, and the portraying was of the colour of vermilion. In the Hindoo temples and vestibules, figures of the most revolting descriptions are portrayed on the walls: there the sexes are painted in such a way as few men of discretion would dare to describe. In some temples there are stone figures in such positions as hell itself could only have suggested: and, recollect, these are the places where men, women, and children assemble for worship.[c]

c *Roberts*

18—21. (18) my mind, *i.e.* God's. (19) calling to remembrance, "mark the danger of suffering the memory to dwell on the pleasure felt in past sins." (20) paramours,[a] or lovers of either sex: the word was formerly used both in a good and bad sense, but now only in a *bad* sense. horses, "The horse was made by the Egyptians the hieroglyphic for a lustful person."[b] (21) lewdness, or lustfulness.

a French, *par amour*, by or with love.

b *Fausset.*

"The language of the Prophet here is very strong, and some readers may recoil from it with horror and aversion. It was doubtless designed to excite such feelings as these, and has a seasonable and solemn warning, especially for times like our own, when there seems to be a growing tendency towards a sensual religion, in lieu of a spiritual one; and to the scenic pomp of creature-worship and idolatry."—*Wordsworth.*

Love: its purity.—

It is a flame and ardour of the mind,
Dead in the proper corpse, quick in another's:
Transfers the lover into the loved.
That he or she that loves, engraves or stamps
The idea of what they love, first in themselves;
Or, like to glasses, so their minds take in
The forms of their beloved, and them reflect.
It is the likeness of affections.
Is both the parent and the nurse of love.
Love is a spiritual coupling of two souls,
So much more excellent as it least relates
Unto the body; circular, eternal;
Not feign'd or made, but born: and then so precious,
As nought can value it but itself; so free,
As nothing can command it but itself.
And in itself so round and liberal,
As, where it favours, it bestows itself.
But we must take and understand this love
Along still as a name of dignity,
Not pleasure.
True love hath no unworthy thought, no light,
Loose, unbecoming appetite, or strain;
But fix'd, constant, pure, immutable.[c]

"Affectation is a greater enemy to the face than the small pox."—*St. Evremond.*

c *Jonson.*

22—27. (22) raise . . lovers, *i.e.* the Babylonians, whose alliance had been given up for the sake of Egypt. These would become the agents for the destruction of Jerusalem. (23) Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, poss. names of Chaldæan tribes.[a] Or these may be the names of the great captains. Or they may be titles or degrees of honour. Or symbolical names of Babylon.[b] (24) chariots, or warlike equipment. (25) jealousy, God here speaks as a grieved husband concerning an unfaithful wife. nose . . ears, this was an Egyptian form of punishment for an adulteress. (26) fair jewels, *Heb.* "instruments of thy decking." (27) thus, *i.e.* by severe and terrible judgments.

a *Ewald.*

b *Pekod* means the land of visitation. *Shoa*, a cry for help. *Koa* is a male camel, and stands for Babylon as Judah's paramour.

Varied punishments of sin.—Men's sins carry with them a punishment in this life. Different sins are differently punished. The degrees of punishment are not always according to our estimate of the culpability. Many sins against a man's body go on

v. 24. *J. C. Dieterici, Ant.* 663.

"Of all the adult male criminals in London, not two in a hundred have entered upon a course of crime who have

in the body, reproducing their penalties from year to year, and from ten years to ten years. And the ignorant crime, or the knowing crime, committed when one is yet in his minority, may repent itself and repent its bitterness and its penalty when one is hoary with age. Mere repenting of sin does not dispossess the power of all sins. There are transgressions that throw persons out of the pale of society. There are single acts, the penalties of which never fail to reassert themselves. There are single wrongs that are never healed. This great transgression that seemed in the commission without any threat and without any danger, pursued this man through all his early life, and clear down until he was an old man and returned from his exile. And even then he was quit of it only by one of those great critical transitions which take place, or may take place, in the life of a man, without which he would have gone on, doubtless, expiating still his great wrong.[c]

28—31. (28) deliver thee, or hand thee over. alienated, *v.* 18. (29) take . . labour, *i.e.* the fruits of thy labour. naked, as female captives were served. (30, 31) thy sister, Aholah, or Samaria.

Two old authors on sin.—God needs no other light to discern our sins by, but the light of His own face. It peereth through the darkest places; the brightness thereof enlighteneth all things, discovers all things; so that the sins that are committed in deepest darkness are all one to Him, as if they were done in the face of the sun. For they are done in His face, that shines more, and from which proceeds more light, than from the face of the sun. So that this, it ought to make us the more fearful to offend: He sees us when we see not Him, and the light of His countenance shines about us when we think ourselves hidden in darkness."—Sorrow for sin, the more it is for sin, as it is against God, is the more ingenuous, the more evangelical, the more genuine act of saving repentance. The more it is for sin, as sin is prejudicial to us, the less ingenuous, the less evangelical, and a less evident, a less comfortable sign of repentance unto life. There are two sure characters of ingenuous Gospel sorrow: when it proceeds from our love to God, when we mourn for offending Him because we love Him. Now these are not, or not so visible, in any sorrow for sin as that which mourns for sin as it is against God. The other springs rather from self-love, when we bewail sin because it is against us; hurtful, dangerous, damnable.[b]

32—35. (32) deep and large, Is. li. 17; Re. xiv. 9. 10. it containeth much, *i.e.* the cup of judgment. (33) filled with drunkenness, God's judgments are often compared to a cup of intoxicating liquors.[a] (34) suck it out, so as to drain every drop. sherds, or pieces.[b] (35) cast . . back,[c] as if determined not to see me: a sign of contempt and aversion.

The most alarming sins.—If I were called to point out the most alarming sins to-day—those which are most widespread in their ravages, most deceitful in their influence, and most soul-destroying in their ultimate effects—I would not mention drunkenness with all its fearful havoc, nor gambling with its crazed victims, nor harlotry with its hellish orgies: but the love of money on the part of men, and the love of display on the part of women.

lived an honest life up to the age of twenty; almost all who enter upon a course of crime do so between the ages of eight and sixteen."—*Earl of Shaftesbury.*

"A hypocrite is good in nothing but sight."—*Pericles.*

c H. W. Beecher.

"By the death of Christ we are greatly stirred up, both to a caution against, and a detestation of, sin: for that must needs be deadly wh. could be healed no other way than by the death of Christ. Who, therefore, seriously considering that his sins could be no other ways expiated than by the death of the Son of God Himself, would not tremble to tread as it were this most precious blood under foot by daily sinning! 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Pet. i. 19; Heb. ix. 14, 28, x. 4, 5."—*Bp. Dowsmant.*

a William Bradshaw (1621).

b David Clarkson (1650).

a Je. xxv. 15, xlviii. 26; Hab. ii. 16.

b "Thou shalt behave thyself as drunken people do, who first throw away, or break in pieces, the cup, and then are angry with themselves as the cause of their own mis-

fortunes."—*Lowth.*

c 1 Ki. xiv. 9; Ne. ix. 26.

d *Crosby.*

While open vice sends its thousands, these fashionable and favoured indulgences send their ten thousands to perdition. They sear the conscience, encrust the soul with an impenetrable shell of worldliness, debauch the affections from every high and heavenly object, and make man or woman the worshipper of self. While doing all this, the poor victim is allowed by public opinion to think himself or herself a Christian; while the drunkard, the gambler, or the prostitute is not deceived by such a thought for a moment.[d]

36—39. (36) judge, *comp.* ch. xx. 4, xxii. 2. (37) pass .. fire, this Moloch worship was regarded as the very height of their idolatrous iniquity. (38) same day, *i.e.* at the very time of making their offerings: see *v.* 39.[a] (39) profane it, by the hypocritical show of worshipping Me, when their hearts were gone after their idols.

Sabbath-breaking.—An active and skilful young minister, while engaged under circumstances of the most promising kind in the village of J——, was told of a miller who, with more than usual of the bravery of profaneness, had repelled every attempt to approach him on the subject of religion, and had daunted all the hopes and efforts of the few serious persons in this vicinity. Among other practices of sinful daring, he uniformly kept his windmill, the most striking object in the hamlet, going on the Sabbath. In a little time, the clergyman determined to make an effort for the benefit of the hopeless man. He undertook the office of going for his flour the next time himself. "A fine mill," said he, as the miller adjusted his sack to receive the flour: "a fine mill, indeed, one of the completest I have ever seen." This was nothing more than just—the miller had heard it a thousand times before; and would firmly have thought it, though he had never heard it once! but his skill and judgment were still gratified by this new testimony, and his feelings conciliated even towards the minister. "But O!" continued his customer, after a little pause, "there is one defect in it!" "What is that?" carelessly asked the miller. "A very serious defect, too." "Eh," replied the miller, turning up his face. "A defect that is likely to counterbalance all its advantages." "Well, what is it?" said the miller, standing straight up, and looking the clergyman in the face. The minister went on—"A defect which is likely to ruin the mill!" "What is it?" rejoined the miller. "And will one day, no doubt, destroy the owner." "And can't you say it out?" exclaimed the impatient miller. "It goes on the Sabbath!" pronounced the minister, in a firm, and solemn, and monitory tone. The astonished man stood blank and thunderstruck, and remained meek and submissive under a remonstrance and exhortation of a quarter of an hour's length, in which the danger of his state and practice, and the call to repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Chrst, were fully proposed to him.[b]

40—44. (40) wash thyself, *etc.*, these were the usual preparations made by an Eastern bride for her husband's coming. paintedst thine eyes, with *Kohl.*[a] "Orientals admire eyebrows that meet over the nose, presenting the appearance of a bow; and when nature has denied them this ornament, they imitate it by artificial paint." (41) stately bed, or had some

a "On the very day that they had burned their children to Moloch in the valley of Gehenna, they shamelessly and hypocritically presented themselves as worshippers in Jehovah's temple."—*Fausset.*

"The mixture of the worship of Jehovah and of false gods was characteristic of the time, and was thoroughly heathen: Jehovah being placed as it were in the list of deities, not acknowledged as the One God."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 37—39. *Jon. Edwards,* ii. 185.

"We are never rendered so ridiculous by qualities which we have, as by those which we aim at, or affect to have."—*From the French.*

b *Whitecross.*

a "This Kohl consists of a collyrium of antimony, or other substance, considered beneficial to the eye as well as ornamental, which is kept in a small bottle, and applied with a probe of silver, ivory, or wood to the edges of the

couch, or divan. **table**, fig. for the idol altar. (42) **Sabeans**, Job i. 15. The word may mean "drunkards." (43) **now commit**, or still keep on in these wicked ways, even with so old an adulteress. (44) **Aholah**, *etc.*, ch. xxiii. 4.

The sting of death is sin.—I once met a little boy in Wales, crying bitterly at his father's door, afraid to go in. I asked him what was the matter. He told me that his mother had sent him out clean in the morning, but that he had got into the water and made his clothes dirty. So he feared to go in, because his father would punish him. We have soiled our characters by sin, and therefore it is that we fear death—dread the meeting with our Father.[b]

45—49. (45) **righteous men**, the Chaldæans as instruments of God's righteous judgments. Ref. may, however, be to the Prophets, who are sometimes said to execute the judgments which they foretell. (46) **removed**, into captivity. (47) **stone them**, this was the Mosiac punishment of the adulteress.[a] (48) **thus**, by great judgments. (49) **bear the sins**, *i.e.* the proper punishment of the sinful. "God is known by the judgment which He executeth."

Madness of sinners.—A recent traveller, relating the incidents of his voyage to India, writes:—"Flocks of greedy albatrosses, petrels, and Cape pigeons, crowded around the ship's stern. A hook was baited with fat, when upwards of a dozen albatrosses instantly rushed at it, and as one after another was being hauled on deck, the remainder, regardless of the struggles of the captured, and the vociferations of the crew, kept swimming about the stern. Not even did those birds which were indifferently hooked and made their escape, desist from seizing the bait a second time." Thus to the letter do ungodly men rush at the baits of Satan; they see others perish, but remain careless, and even when they are all but destroyed themselves they persist in their infatuation.[b]

eyelids, for the purpose of blackening them, and thus enhancing the brightness of the eye, which is usually large, shaded by long lashes, and decidedly the finest feature of Oriental women."—*Van Lennep.*

b Rev. T. Jones.

a Le. xx. 10; De. xxii. 22; Jno. viii. 5.

"Sin is an intolerable burden (Isa. i. 3); such as presseth down (Heb. xii. 1); a burden it is to God (Amos ii. 13); to Christ it was when it made Him sweat water and blood; to the angels when it brake their backs and sunk them into hell, to men, under whom the very earth groaneth, the axletree thereof is ever ready to crack, etc. It could not bear Korah and his company, and spewed out the Canaanites, etc."—*John Trapp.*

b Spurgeon.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

1—5. (1) **ninth year**, of Jehoiachim's captivity. (2) **this same day**, *i.e.* though Ezekiel is far away fr. Jerus., he is to tell his fellow-exiles that on the very day when he spoke to them. Nebuc. had commenced the siege.[a] (3) **parable**, or illustrative teaching. **pot**, or caldron for boiling flesh. Comp. the fig. ch. xi. 3.[b] (4) **good piece**, or choice piece.[c] Ironically reminding them of their boast that they are the choice members of the community. (5) **bones**, *i.e.* make the strong men of Jerus. themselves to be fuel for burning the city. The poor of the city are represented by the *bones*.

The boiling caldron (*v.* 1).—From the vision and its first fulfilment we gather—I. That the sins of any city are an offence to God. They are—1. Seen by Him: 2. With anger. II. That the sins of any city will ensure its doom. 1. History illustrates this; 2. Prophecy predicts this; 3. The law of causation involves this. III. That the sins of any city concern every individual inhabitant. 1. They bring sorrow on all; 2. They give a mission to all. Learn:—(1) Seek to evangelise the entire city, so

a 2 Ki. xxv. 1; Je. lii 4.

"That Ezekiel on the banks of the Chebar knew what was taking place at Jerus., on the very day of its occurrence, may be a difficulty to those expositors who deny that God can make any prophetical communication, but need not incline us to discover, with them, in this passage a prediction after the event."—*Kliefoth.*

b "The caldron

is the city of Jerus.: the fire is the surrounding army; the flesh and bones are the inhabitants shut in within the walls."—*Spk. Com.*

c 1 Sa. ix. 21.

d U. R. Thomas.

"The sorrow of the world, though it seem a thick homogeneous covering over all human life, is yet made up of as many different kinds as that carpet of green which covers the earth. Here, it is chiefly the pain of a diseased body; and there, the eating canker of a discontented mind. At one time the loss of property, at another, the loss of friends, is the more immediate cause of grief. Some are distressed because they cannot get this world's good, and others because they must soon part with that which they have gotten."—*Arnot.*

as to save it; (2) Seek to convert individuals, that at least they may be saved.[d]

Remains of ancient Tyre.—So literal has been the fulfilment of this prophecy, that Tyre, once so rich and populous, has become a mere fishing station; and nearly every traveller who has visited its remains has remarked upon the fact that fishermen were to be seen drying their nets upon the top of the rocks, which stretch into the sea. Volney, the celebrated infidel historian, adds his testimony, unconsciously, to the truth of God's Word. He says: "The whole village contains only fifty or sixty poor families, who live but indifferently on the produce of their little grounds and a trifling fishery. The houses they occupy are no longer, as in the time of Strabo, edifices three or four stories high, but wretched huts, ready to crumble to pieces." Since Volney's time the place has somewhat increased in population. Dr. Thomson, in *The Land and the Book*, describing his visit to Tyre in 1857, and contrasting her present with her former state, says: "The Hebrew historians, prophets, and poets constantly allude to her power, wealth, luxury, and vices; and Ezekiel seems to tax the entire geography of the known world to set forth the extent of her commerce, and the multitude of her riches. It would take a volume to trace the varied fortunes of Tyre through Egyptian, Chaldæan, Macedonian, Roman, Saracenic, Frank, and Turkish dynasties, down to the present wretched representative of so much greatness and glory. With but few exceptions it is now a cluster of miserable huts, inhabited by about 3,500 impoverished Matawelies and Arab Christians, destitute alike of education, of arts, and of enterprise, carrying on with Egypt a small trade in tobacco from the neighbouring hills, and of lava mill-stones from the Hauran. This is a sorry schedule for the name of Tyre, but it is about all she can exhibit:—

"Dim is her glory, gone her fame,
Her boasted wealth has fled;
On her proud rock, alas! her shame,
The fisher's net is spread.

"The Tyrian harp has slumbered long,
And Tyria's mirth is low.
The timbrel, dulcimer, and song
Are hushed, or wake to woe."

6—9. (6) **scum**, not that floating on the top in process of boiling, but the "deeply-grained verdigris and rust in the pot itself."[a] **piece by piece**, *i.e.* bring out the contents piece by piece. Ref. is to the chief men of the city. **no lot**, taken usually to decide which should go into captivity, and which remain. All would go forth to captivity or death. (7) **top . . rock**, where it lies exposed, and does not sink in so as to be hidden. (8) **fury . . vengeance**, the blood crying as Abel's did.[b] (9) **pile**, fig. for the preparations for the city's destruction.

Arab camel-feast.—The following account of a royal Arab camel-feast will afford some illustration of the parable contained in this chapter: "Before midday, a carpet being spread in the middle of the tent, our dinner was brought in, being served up in large wooden bowls between two men, and truly, to my appre-

a Wordsworth.

b Ge. iv. 10.

vv. 6, 7. *Dr. T. Rennell*, 193.

"By retaining any branch of our own wills or desires unrenounced, as not resigned up into God's hand, we give him hold of us, who will never let hold go, unless we cut off the

hension, load enough for them. Of these great platters there were about fifty or sixty in number, perhaps more, with a great many little ones; I mean, such as one man was able to bring in, strewed here and there among them, and placed for a border or garnish round about the table. In the middle was one of a larger size than all the rest, in which were the camel's bones, and a thin broth in which they were boiled. The other greater ones seemed all filled with one and the same sort of provision, a kind of plum-broth, made of rice and the fleshy part of the camel, with currants and spices, being of a somewhat darker colour than what is made in our country" (*Philosophical Transactions Abridged*). The Hebrew word translated "burn," should have been rendered, as in the margin, "heap." The meaning cannot be that the bones were to be burnt under the caldron, but that they were to be heaped up in it; for it is said, "let them seethe the bones of it therein." With this interpretation the Septuagint translation of the passage agrees; and, viewed in this light, the object is ascertained by the foregoing extract.[c]

10—14. (10) spice it well, better, make it froth and bubble in the swift boiling.[a] (11) set it, *i.e.* the very pot itself; let *it* be burned as well as its contents. scum, or rust. (12) lies, a word here indicating *idols*. not forth, by the previous admonitions of the Prophets, or providential dealings.[b] (13) my fury, unto burning and destruction. (14) according . . doings, ch. xxiii. 24.

Punishment of sin.—What a diabolical invention was the "Virgin's kiss," once used by the fathers of the Inquisition! The victim was pushed forward to kiss the image, when, lo, its arms enclosed him in a deadly embrace, piercing his body with a hundred hidden knives. The tempting pleasures of sin offer to the unwary just such a virgin's kiss. The sinful joys of the flesh lead, even in this world, to results most terrible, while, in the world to come, the daggers of remorse and despair will cut and wound beyond all remedy.[c]—*Sin, the toil of it.*—"There was a man in the town where I was born who used to steal all his firewood. He would get up on cold nights, and go and take it from his neighbours' wood-piles. A computation was made, and it was ascertained that he spent more time and worked harder to get his fuel, than he would have been obliged to if he had earned it in an honest way, and at ordinary wages. And this thief is a type of thousands of men who work a great deal harder to please the devil than they would have to work to please God."[d]

15–18. (15, 16) desire . . eyes, *i.e.* Ezekiel's wife. She is to represent the sanctuary in which the Jews so much gloried; *v.* 21. mourn, *etc.*, bec. it was a righteous Divine judgment; or to indicate that there would be no time for the ordinary lamentations over the dead.[a] (17) tire, ref. to the high priest's mitre, wh. he might not put off.[b] In times of mourning the head was often shaved, or dust was cast on it. cover . . lips, a usual sign of mourning.[c] bread of men, or of mourners. Food was usually supplied for the comfort of mourners. (18) wife died, note the submissive obedience of the Prophet.

The stroke of death under the direction of God (*v.* 16).—

member which offendeth us. For, as one very well observes, so the snare be strong and hold sure, a bird, though caught but by one claw, shall as certainly be the fowler's portion, as if she had been taken by both wings."—*Dr. Jackson.*

c Burder.

a "Or, 'I will make the foe delight in its destruction as much as one delights in well-seasoned savoury meat.'"—*Fausset.*

b "I did what was requisite on my part towards thy conversion, but thou refusedst to comply with those frequent calls and exhortations I gave thee."—*Lowth.*

v. 14. *T. Randall*, 396.

c Spurgeon.

d Beecher.

a "The times that were coming were so extraordinary as to leave no room for the quiet lamentation for the dead according to the usual forms of mourning."—*Spk. Com.*

b Le. xxi. 10.

c Le. xiii. 45; 2

Sa. xv. 30; Je. xiv. 4; Mic. iii. 7.

r. 16. *Dr. D. Wilson*, ii. 355; *J. Morley*, 366; *C. R. Maturin*, i.

d Alpha in 400 Sks.

"This refers to mourning for the dead, and the Prophet was forbidden to use any symbol of sorrow on the death of his wife. At a funeral ceremony the tires and turbans are taken off, and the sandals are laid aside. Thus nobles, who wear the most costly turbans, are seen walking with their heads uncovered, and those who had on beautiful sandals are barefoot. But the Prophet was to put on his tire and sandals, to indicate he was not mourning for the dead." —*Roberts.*

e Paxton.

a U. R. Thomas.

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone, leads to the land where sorrow is unknown; no trav'ller ever reach'd that blest abode, who found not thorns and briers on his road."—*Cowper.*

"He was a man who stole the livery of the court of heaven, to serve the devil in."—*Pollok.*

I. That social connections are desirable enjoyments. They are—1. Various: 2. Justly desirable. II. That these enjoyments are subject to the stroke of death. 1. This stroke should be expected by all: 2. We should seriously prepare for it: 3. Our preparation should be habitual; 4. The saint's recovery from this stroke should be anticipated by faith in God's promises, and hope of renewed communion with saints in heavenly glory. III. That the stroke of death is under the direction of God. 1. The death of our pious friends is only a removal, it is not an annihilation; 2. They are taken away by God, their rewarder, our benefactor; 3. They are taken away with a wise and gracious design, for their good and ours.[d]

Mourning for the dead (*v.* 17).—The time of mourning for the dead was longer or shorter, according to the dignity of the person. Among the modern Jews the usual time is seven days, during which they shut themselves up in their houses; or, if some extraordinary occasion forces them to appear in public, it is without shoes, as a token they have lost a dear friend. This explains the reason that when Ezekiel was commanded to abstain from the rites of mourning, he was directed to put his shoes on his feet. To cover the lips was a very ancient sign of mourning; and it continues to be practised among the Jews of Barbary to this day. When they return from the grave to the house of the deceased, the chief mourner receives them with his jaws tied up with a linen cloth, in imitation of the manner in which the face of the dead is covered; and by this the mourner is said to testify that he was ready to die for his friend. Muffled in this way, the mourner goes for seven days, during which the rest of his friends come twice every twenty-four hours to pray with him. This allusion is perhaps involved in the charge which Ezekiel received, when his wife died, to abstain from the customary forms of mourning: "Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead: bind the tire of thy head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men." The law of Moses required a leper to have his clothes rent, his head bare, and a covering upon his upper lip, because he was considered as a dead man, "of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb."[e]

19—23. (19) people, *i.e.* the fellow-exiles. (20, 21) excellency . . strength, or object of your boasting; the temple of which you were so proud. soul pitieth, or loveth. They would soon have occasion to pity it. (22) cover . . men, *comp. v.* 17. (23) pine away, &c. forbidden to find the usual relieving expressions of grief; left to a secret, inward, heart-consuming sorrow.

Sin the worst sorrow (*vv.* 15—24).—It is so because—I. Other sorrows may have no evil, but even good in them; this is essentially and eternally evil. II. Other sorrows are remediable: this leads to destruction. III. Other sorrows may come direct from God; this is ever in direct antagonism to Him. IV. Other sorrows have to do with men in their relation to others; this with his own inner being and his relation to God. Learn:—1. Rightly weigh your own sorrows; 2. Rightly deal with the world's sorrows; 3. Rightly value the Saviour's mission.[a]

24—27. (24) a sign, typical representation of what would

befall them. this cometh, the destruction of the temple. (25) strength, *v.* 21. (26) escapeth, as a fugitive, to carry the terrible tidings. (27) sign, portent, or wonder. When the event has happened, they shall be convinced that your action and experience had been a prophetical sign for them.

The preacher —

The pulpit
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth : there stands
The legate of the skies. His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, armed himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect !

* * * * *

To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say that they respect themselves.[a]

v. 24. *W. Reading*, iv. 157.

"Keep in mind that excellent rule : never preach a single sermon, from which an unenlightened hearer might not learn the plan of salvation, even though he never afterwards heard another discourse."–*L. Richmond.*

How do you know whether you are pure gold, or base metal ? Gold, if pure, must bear the royal stamp to give it currency. If you lack the impress of Christ, you cannot pass current in the kingdom of heaven.

a Cowper.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

1–4. (1, 2) Ammonites, ch. xxi. 28. "In the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalĕm, Nebuchadnezzar subdued the Ammonites and Moabites."[a] (3) aha, the expression of contempt. They insolently exulted over the fall of the temple, regarding it as the triumph of heathenism over the claims of Jehovah. (4) men of the east, synonym for the Chaldæans. or poss. here the wild Eastern tribes who should distress the Ammonite country after it had been conquered by the Chaldæans ; palaces, better, "encampments."

The fruitless vine (*v.* 1).—I. Here is a lesson of humility for saints. "What is the vine more than any tree ?" etc. II. A lesson of searching for all who are professors. 1. What is a fruitless professor ? 2. Why is it that these men are fruitless and must be cast away ? 3. What is God's estimation of fruitless professors ? 4. What is to become of this fruitless tree ?[b]

The dangers of seed-time.—The seed-time is attended with considerable danger to the husbandmen in Palestine and Syria ; for although the more peaceful Arabs apply themselves to agriculture to supply their families with grain, many of the same wandering race choose rather to procure the corn which they want by violence than by tillage. So precarious are the fruits of the earth in Palestine, that the farmer is often seen sowing accompanied by an armed friend, to prevent his being robbed of the seed. These vexatious and often desolating incursions are

a Josephus.

Ammon, descended from Lot, held the region E. of Jordan, separated fr. the Amorites on the N. by the river Jabbok, and from Moab on the S. by the river Arnon.

b Spurgeon.

"Oh ! when the retiring world melts away behind us to a small point, how we shall mourn over our present follies, our sad pleasures, our wayward and unbridled sorrows, and our unheavenly lives ! Each departed friend is a mag-

net that attracts us to the next world, and the old man lives among graves. A small grievance makes us beside ourselves, a great sorrow makes us retire within ourselves; a bell with a small crack sounds dull, but if it be broken more, it sounds clear again."—*Richter.*

"There are a thousand joyous things in life, which pass unheeded in a life of joy as thine hath been, till breezy sorrow comes to ruffle it; and daily duties paid hardly at first, at length will bring repose to the sad mind that studies to perform them."—*Talfourd.*

described by the Prophet in the following remarkable terms, when he denounced the judgments of God against the descendants of Ammon: "Behold, therefore, I will deliver thee to the men of the East for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they shall eat thy fruit and they shall drink thy milk." The practice of robbing the sower in the field seems to have been very ancient, and is perhaps alluded to by the Psalmist, when he encourages the righteous man to persevere in working out his salvation, in spite of the dangers to which he is exposed, by the complete success which in due time shall assuredly crown his endeavours. "They that sow in tears," on account of the danger from the lurking and unfeeling Arabian, "shall reap in joy." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." It is much more natural to suppose that these verses refer to such acts of violence, than to imagine, with all the commentators who have turned their attention to this circumstance, that they allude to the anxiety of a husbandman who sows his corn in a time of great scarcity, and is afraid his hopes may be disappointed by the failure of the succeeding harvest. We nowhere read that such fearful anticipations ever produced weeping and lamentation, although the Orientals are very prone to violent expressions of grief. But, if we refer the passage to the danger which the farmer in those parts of the world often incurred, of losing his precious seed, the hope of his future subsistence, and even his life, in attempting to defend it, we have an adequate cause for his tears and lamentations. The passage contains a beautiful picture of the success which, by the blessing of God, attended the efforts of His chosen people to return from their captivity to the land of their fathers, and holds out a powerful encouragement to believers in Christ to persevere in their heavenly course, notwithstanding the numerous and severe trials of this present life; for, in due time, they shall certainly enter into the rest which remains for the people of God.[c]

c Paxton.

a Lowth.

Is. xvii. 2, xxii. 10, xxxii. 14; Zep. ii. 14, 15.

b U. R. Thomas.

"Ah! when the apples are ripe a child's foot against the tree will bring scores and scores of them to the ground. He might take his little stick and throw it twenty times, and not hit more than a single apple, for he would be working according to his own skill, and would ac-

5—7. (5) **Rabbah**, De. iii. 11. **couching-place**, place for resting and feeding the sheep. "It is a proverbial expression for utter destruction to say that grass grows where a town has stood."[a] (6) **clapped**, *etc.*, signs of gladness at the destruction of Jerusalem, but in God's sight proofs of envy and malice; a savage kind of joy. (7) **spoil**, or portion to be devoured.

The dirge over the nations (chapters xxv.—xxxiii.).—The universal and permanent lessons of all this are clearly—1. The interest of a true man in other nations beside his own: 2. The universality of God's dominion; 3. The similarity in the laws of moral history in all lands and times: 4. The degrees in retribution according to the degrees of sin.[b]

Shepherds and the seasons.—The Syrian shepherds were exposed, with their flocks, to all the vicissitudes of the seasons. It was indeed impossible to erect buildings capacious enough to receive the countless numbers of cattle, which constituted the wealth of those pastoral princes. Their servants were, therefore, compelled to watch the flocks night and day. The flocks of Libya "often graze both night and day, and for a whole month together, and repair into long deserts, without any shelter, so wide the plain extends." The Mesopotamian shepherd was reduced to the same

incessant labour, chilled by the piercing cold of the morning, and scorched by the succeeding heats of a flaming sun, the opposite action of which often swells and chafes his lips and face. Jacob complains, "Thus I was; in the day, the drought consumed me, and frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes." In times long posterior to the age when Jacob flourished, the angels who descended to announce the birth of our Lord found the shepherds, to whom they were sent, keeping watch over their flocks by night. To prevent them from wandering, they shut them up in a fold formed of hurdles, and took their station on the outside, to defend them from the attacks of wild beasts, or bands of robbers, that infested the country, and preyed upon the property of the peaceful and industrious inhabitants. When the Prophet Ezekiel threatened the Ammonites, that Rabbah, their capital, should become a stable for camels, we are not to imagine that the Arabian shepherds were careful to provide such coverts for these more tender animals. Chardin says, that as they feed them on the ground, and do not litter them, they never think of erecting such buildings for their reception. The same fact is admitted by Dr. Shaw, when he makes a supposition that the cattle of these countries would be much more numerous than they are, if they had some little shelter in winter. The only shelter to which they have recourse, is the desolate ruin; and to this circumstance the Prophet Ezekiel most probably alluded, when he described Rabbah as about to become a stable for camels, or, as the original term may be rendered with equal propriety, a place of camels, where they screen themselves from the rays of a burning sun, and feed on the nettles, and other plants, which spring up among the mouldering walls of ruined habitations. The same term is rendered in the twenty-third psalm, pastures; and perhaps all that the Prophet means is only this, that Rabbah should be so completely destroyed, that camels should feed on the place where it stood; and if this was his meaning, it has been long since realised, for the last remains of that proud city have entirely disappeared. The greatest skill and vigilance, and even tender care, are required in the management of such immense flocks as wander on the Syrian plains. Their prodigious numbers compel the keepers to remove them too frequently in search of fresh pastures, which proves very destructive to the young that have not strength to follow. This circumstance displays the energy of Jacob's apology to his brother Esau, for not attending him as he requested: "The flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flocks would die." It illustrates also another passage in the prophecies of Isaiah: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young:" a beautiful image, expressing with great force and elegance, the tender and unceasing attention of the shepherd to his flock.[c]

8—11. (8) **Moab**, the neighbour country of Ammon. **Seir**, the same as Edom. These countries joined in hostility to Judah, and in joy at the fall of Jerusalem. (9) **open the side**, or shoulder: expose them to the attacks of the invaders. **frontiers**, defence-cities, in which the people placed the utmost confidence. **Beth-jeshimoth**, *etc.*, Nu. xxxii. 38; Jos. xiii. 20; Je. xlviii. 25.

complish but little; but when he strikes the trunk of the tree dozens of apples have been waiting for that, and they drop at his feet, and he gets twenty times as many as he would do by plying his stick merely. Now in every part of life God has fruit ready to drop into your lap; and the abundance that you get is not to be measured by the skill with which you can throw, but by that Divine nature which does exceeding abundantly more than we can ask' or think."—*Beecher.*

"'The meteor, if it once fall, cannot be rekindled.' When those who once flashed before the eyes of the religious public with the blaze of a vain profession, fall into open and scandalous sin, it is impossible to renew their glory. Once break the egg of hypocrisy, and who can repair the damage?"—*Spurgeon.*

c *Paxton.*

a "Upon the children of Ammon, *i.e.* I will open Moab to the men of the East, who, having overrun the children of Ammon, shall then fall upon

Moab."—*Fairbairn.*

"However constant the visitations of sickness and bereavement, the fall of the year is most thickly strewn with the fall of human life. Everywhere the spirit of some sad power seems to direct the time: it hides from us the blue heavens: it makes the green wave turbid; it walks through the fields, and lays the damp ungathered harvest low; it cries out in the night wind and the shrill hail; it steals the summer bloom from the infant cheek; it makes old age shiver to the heart; it goes to the churchyard, and chooses many a grave; it flies to the bell, and enjoins it when to toll. It is God that goes His yearly round; that gathers up the appointed lives; and, even where the hour is not come, engraves by pain and poverty many a sharp and solemn lesson on the heart."—*James Martineau.*

(10) with, better, *against.*[a] (11) judgments, deserved and long called for, now to be executed.

The state of Ammon and Moab.—While the country is thus despoiled and desolate, there are valleys and tracts throughout it which "are covered with a fine coat of verdant pasture, and are places of resort to the Bedouins, where they pasture their camels and their sheep." "The whole way we traversed," says Seetzen, "we saw villages in ruins, and met numbers of Arabs with their camels," etc. Mr. Buckingham describes a building among the ruins of Ammon, "the masonry of which was evidently constructed of materials gathered from the ruins of other and older buildings on the spot. On entering it at the south end," he adds, "we came to an open square court, with arched recesses on each side, the sides nearly facing the cardinal points. The recesses into the northern and southern walls were originally open passages, and had arched doorways facing each other; but the first of these was found wholly closed up, and the last was partially filled up, leaving only a narrow passage, just sufficient for the entrance of one man and the goats, which the Arab keepers drive in here occasionally for shelter during the night." He relates that he lay down among "the flocks of sheep and goats," close beside the ruins of Ammon; and particularly remarks that, during the night, he was almost entirely prevented from sleeping by the "bleating of flocks." So literally true is it, although Seetzen, and Burckhardt, and Buckingham, who relate the facts, make no reference or allusion whatever to any of the prophecies, and travelled for a different object than the elucidation of the Scriptures, that "the chief city of the Ammonites is a stable for camels, and a couching-place for flocks." "The Ammonites shall not be remembered among the nations." While the Jews, who were long their hereditary enemies, continue as distinct a people as ever, though dispersed among all nations, no trace of the Ammonites remains; none are now designated by their name, nor do any claim descent from them. They did exist, however, long after the time when the eventual annihilation of their race was foretold, for they retained their name, and continued a great multitude, until the second century of the Christian era. "Yet they are cut off from the people. Ammon has perished out of the countries; it is destroyed." No people is attached to its soil—none regard it as their country and adopt its name; and the Ammonites are not numbered among other nations.

12—14. (12) Edom, Nu. xxiv. 18. 19. The descendants of Esau kept up their grudge against the descendants of Jacob. taking vengeance, or manifesting a most implacable resentment.[a] (13) Teman, Ge. xxxvi. 11—15. Dedan, Ge. x. 7.[b] (14) my vengeance, in answer to *their* vengeance, *v.* 12.

Ammon.—Seetzen (whose indefatigable ardour led him, in defiance of danger, the first to explore the countries which lie east of the Jordan, and east and south of the Dead Sea, or the territories of Ammon, Moab, and Edom) justly characterises Ammon as "once the residence of many kings—an ancient town, which flourished long before the Greeks and Romans, even before the Hebrews;" and he briefly enumerates those remains of ancient greatness and splendour which are most distinguishable amid its ruins. "Although this town has been destroyed and deserted for many ages, I still found there some remarkable ruins;

a The subduing of Edom by David further deepened the ill-feeling, 2 Sa. viii. 14.

b "Teman and Dedan were districts, the former in the S., the latter in the N. Hence from Teman to Dedan means 'over the whole country.'"—*Spk. Com.*

"There was but one crack in the

which attest its ancient splendour. Such as, 1st, A square building, very highly ornamented, which has been perhaps a mausoleum. 2nd, The ruins of a large palace. 3rd, A magnificent amphitheatre of immense size, and well preserved, with a peristyle of Corinthian pillars without pedestals. 4th, A temple with a great number of columns. 5th. The ruins of a large church, perhaps the see of a bishop in the time of the Greek emperors. 6th, The remains of a temple with columns set in a circular form, and which are of an extraordinary size. 7th. The remains of the ancient wall, with many other edifices." Burckhardt, who afterwards visited the spot, describes it with greater minuteness. He gives a plan of the ruins; and particularly noted the ruins of many temples, of a spacious church, a curved wall, a high-arched bridge, the banks and bed of the river still partially paved; a large theatre, with successive tiers of apartments excavated in the rocky side of a hill; Corinthian columns fifteen feet high; the castle, a very extensive building, the walls of which are thick, and denote a remote antiquity; many cisterns and vaults; and a plain covered with the decayed ruins of private buildings;—monuments of ancient splendour standing amid a desolate heap.[c]

lantern, and the wind has found it out and blown out the candle. How great a mischief one unguarded point of character may cause us! One spark blew up the magazine and shook the whole country for miles around. One leak sunk the vessel and drowned all on board. One wound may kill the body; one sin destroy the soul."—*Spurgeon.*

c *Keith.*

15—17. (15) Philistines,[a] ancient foes of Israel, dwelling in the plains towards the coast, S.W. of Judah. old hatred, carrying on into later times the early hatred of the races. (16) Cherethims, another name for the Philistines, representing prob. one of the immigrations which formed the nation.[b] remnant, *etc.*, Am. i. 8. (17) furious rebukes, or heavy judgments.

Vindication of revenge.—

Lo, by thy side, where Rape and Murder stand:
Now give some 'surance that thou art Revenge,
Stab them, or tear them on thy chariot-wheels;
And then I'll come, and be thy waggoner,
And whirl along with thee about the globes,
Provide thee proper palfreys, black as jet,
To hale thy vengeful waggon swift away,
And find out murderers in their guilty caves;
And, when thy car is loaden with their heads,
I will dismount, and by the waggon-wheel
Trot, like a servile footman, all day long;
Even from Hyperion's rising in the east,
Until his very downfall in the sea.[c]

a Comp. Is. xi. 14, xiv. 29—32, etc.

b 1 Sa. xxx. 14; Je. xlvii. 4; Zep. ii. 5.

"But they were not aware that there are things which make revenge a virtue by reflection, and not an impulse of mere anger; though the laws sleep, justice wakes, and injured souls oft do a public right with private wrong, and justify their deeds unto themselves."—*Byron.*

c *Shakespeare.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1—6. (1) first . . month, wh. precise month is not stated. (2) Tyrus, the Latin form of the word Tyre,[a] Jos. xix. 29; 2 Sa. xxiv. 7. gates, *etc.*, in and out of wh. the merchandise went. Jerusalem had long been a centre-place on the highway of commerce, and Tyre might be jealous of its prosperity.[b] (3) many nations, alluding to the composite character of the Bab. army. as the sea, in its storm-time. A suitable fig. in a message to a sea-port town. (4) scrape her dust, making an entire riddance of her public buildings. (5) spreading of nets,

a Nebuch.'s siege of Tyre lasted thirteen years.

b "In the true spirit of mercantile competition, Tyre exulted in the thought that the trade of Jerus. would now

be diverted into her markets."—*Spk. Com.*

c So *Maundrell, etc.*

"Of all the adult male criminals in London, not two in a hundred have entered upon a course of crime who have lived an honest life up to the age of twenty: almost all who enter upon a course of crime do so between the ages of eight and sixteen."—*Earl of Shaftesbury.*

d *Keith.*

a Tyre, as is well known, suffered two memorable sieges: one from Nebuchadnezzar, the other from Alexander the Great.

"If but one sin be unrepented of, the man continues still a bond-slave of hell. By one little hole, a ship will sink into the bottom of the sea. The stab of a penknife to the heart will as well destroy a man as all the daggers that killed Cæsar in the senate-house. The soul will be strangled with one cord of vanity as well as with all the cart-ropes of iniquity: only the more sins, the more plagues and fiercer flames in hell; but he that lives and dies impenitent in one, it will be his destruction. One dram of poison will despatch a

travellers say that this is literally fulfilled.[c] (6) daughters, or dependent cities.

Destruction of Tyre.—One of the most singular events in history was the manner in which the siege of Tyre was conducted by Alexander the Great. Irritated that a single city should alone oppose his victorious march, enraged at the murder of some of his soldiers, and fearful for his fame—even his army's despairing of success could not deter him from the siege. And Tyre was taken in a manner, the success of which was more wonderful than the design was daring; for it was surrounded by a wall one hundred and fifty feet in height, and situated on an island half a mile distant from the shore. A mound was formed from the continent to the island; and the ruins of old Tyre, two hundred and forty years after its demolition, afforded ready materials for the purpose. Such was the work, that the attempts at first defeated the power of an Alexander. The enemy consumed and the storm destroyed it. But its remains, buried beneath the water, formed a barrier which rendered successful his renewed efforts. A vast mass of additional matter was requisite. The soil and the very rubbish were gathered and heaped. And the mighty conqueror, who afterwards failed in raising again any of the ruins of Babylon, cast those of Tyre into the sea, and took her very dust from off her. He left not the remnant of a ruin—and the site of ancient Tyre is now unknown.[d]

7—10. (7) king of kings, one who has subdued other kings, and holds them in subjection. (8) fort, *etc.*, the description of an ancient siege.[a] (9) axes, or hatchets. (10) dust, *etc.*, when they rush in through the breaches to sack the city.

History of Tyre.—This history of the city is most affecting, and it has been said with much force, that "the noble dust of Alexander, traced by the imagination till found stopping a beer-barrel, would scarcely afford a stronger contrast of grandeur and abasement than Tyre, at the period of being besieged by that conqueror, and the modern town of Tsour erected on its ashes." It was probably a colony of the Sidonians, as it is called "the daughter of Sidon." From its present name appears to have been taken the general name of Syria. Its first mention is in Joshua, where it is called "the strong city Tyre." At an early period it became the mistress of the seas; traded even to Britain, and planted colonies in different parts of the Mediterranean, among which Carthage became the most celebrated. The history of Tyre is more especially interesting to the Christian from its connection with prophecy, and from the striking eloquence with which inspiration has described the majesty of its brighter days, and the impressive circumstances of its destruction. It was also referred to by our Saviour, when He pronounced woe upon the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, because they had seen His mighty works and repented not. Her merchants were princes, her traffickers the honourable of the earth. She heaped up silver as dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. The boards of her ships were of the fir trees of Senir, her masts of the cedars of Lebanon, her oars of the oaks of Bashan, her benches of the ivory of Chittim, her sails of fine linen, broidered work from Egypt, and her awnings were of purple. Her heart was lifted up, and she said, "I am a god; I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas." Such is the description given in sacred writ of the

pride and magnificence of ancient Tyre. Now, in the language of the same authority, the noise of her songs is ceased, and the voice of her harps is no more heard: her walls are broken down, her pleasant houses are no more; she is made like the top of a rock, a place to spread nets upon: she is built no more.

11—14. (11) tread down, the people in the streets. strong garrisons, lit. *pillars of strength.* "The multitude and strength of the pillars of Tyre are attested by its ruins."[a] (12) pleasant houses, or houses of desire. in . . water, where they can even to this day be seen.[b] (13) noise . . cease, Is. xxiv. 8; Je. vii. 34, xvi. 9. (14) top of a rock, *i.e.* quite bare.[c]

Present state of Tyre.—Passing by Tyre from curiosity only, I came to be a mournful witness of the truth of that prophecy, "that Tyre, the queen of nations, should be a rock for fishers to dry their nets on." Two wretched fishermen, with miserable nets, having just given over their occupation, with very little success. I engaged them, at the expense of their nets, to drag in those places where they said shellfish might be caught, in hopes to have brought out one of the famous purple fish. I did not succeed: but in this I was, I believe, as lucky as the old fishers had ever been. The purple fish at Tyre seems to have been only a concealment of their knowledge of cochineal, as, if the whole city of Tyre applied to nothing else but fishing, they would not have coloured twenty yards of cloth in a year.[d]

15—18. (15) shake, with fear for themselves. (16) princes of the sea, the merchant rulers of Carthage, and other colonies founded by Tyre. These would be in extreme distress on account of the fall of Tyre. (17) lamentation, *comp.* Re. xviii. 9. of seafaring men, or of the seas. "Tyre was an inhabited city rising from out of the sea that surrounded her." haunt it, the strangers who come, for trade purposes, to dwell in it. (18) isles, or colonies on the Mediterranean islands and shores.

Tyre as a sea-port.—The stirring scenes of a sea-port exhibit a picture of more constant excitement than can ever be presented by any other place. The arrival and discharge of ships; the cries of the captains as they direct their ready mariners; the songs of the boatmen, the dash of the oars, and the roll of the sea; the solitary female, whose eye catches every speck that appears white in the horizon, and never leaves it till one after another of its inmates have been carefully numbered, that perchance she may discover among them the father of her disconsolate children; the faltering step of the aged sailor, whose battles have been fought, and whose victories have been won; the tears of those who are bidding farewell, and the rapture of those who are greeting the arrival of a long-absent friend; the anxious assemblies of the merchants, either speaking of traffic, or proclaiming their good fortune, or lamenting the loss of some fair ship in a destructive gale; the reckless merriment of the seamen, as they enjoy upon land a little respite from their constant toils;—all these, and a thousand other scenes of noise, and joyousness, and wealth, have been exhibited upon these shores. They have passed away, like the feverish dream of a disturbed sleep. Ships may be seen, but at a distance: no merchant of the earth ever enters the name of Tyre upon his books, and where thousands once assembled in pomp and pride, and there was

man, and one reigning sin will bring him to endless misery."—*R. Bolton.*

a Wordsworth.

b "The number of granite columns that lie in the sea, particularly in the north of the island, is surprising. The east wall of the *inner* harbour is entirely founded upon them, and they are thickly spread over the bottom of the sea on every side."—*Thomson.*

c "Alexander, as Arrian relates, scraped off the very dust of old Tyre to build his causeway, and now you can find none of the remains except by digging below the surface."—*Ibid.*

d Bruce.

"Were a cup of pleasant wine put into your hands, and you knew for certain that a deadly poison was mixed up with the wine, which would rack you with the fiercest pains, and ere long tear soul and body in sunder, who would drink it?—who would not dash it from him forthwith? Yet, if we had but faith we should know and feel that sin is deadlier than the deadliest poison, that it racks us with fiercer pains, and gives us over to a more terrible dissolution: for it cuts us off from God, from Him who is the only source of all blessing

and peace."—*Hare.*

a Hardy.

"You have seen the canopy of heaven covered with the black clouds of a thunderstorm, and every now and then the darkness has been made more visible, or sensible, by sudden flashes of lightning. Just like these flashes are the pleasures of the world; they last but for a moment, and leave darkness and misery behind; whereas true happiness sheds a continual daylight on the soul."—*Christian's Penny Mag.*

a Hogg.

beauty, and splendour, and dominion, I could discover only a few children amusing themselves at play, and a party of Turks sitting in gravity, and sipping their favourite coffee.[a]

19—21. (19) bring . . deep, the sea did actually come to cover the ruins. (20) down, *etc.*, comp. Is. xiv. 9. land of the living, *i.e.* the land of the true God. (21) be no more, as a great commercial city. "As to old Tyre the prophecy was literally fulfilled, not a vestige of it being left."

The ruins of Tyre.—Relentless desolation seems to brood over this devoted region. Fragments of clustered columns and broken walls, at the south-east extremity of the town—the only visible remains of the structures even of the Middle Ages—perhaps mark the site of the magnificent metropolitan church, once the conspicuous ornament of Christian Tyre. In that splendid edifice of rich Gothic architecture, distinguished by three spacious naves and two lofty towers, where councils were held and princes and prelates assembled, the bones of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa were deposited in a sumptuous sepulchre. Every trace of the mausoleum of Origen, raised in the third century, and still existing in the twelfth, has now disappeared. Broken shafts thrown into a narrow creek awkwardly serve the purpose of a bridge; others piled in the sea, form a barrier against hostile approach. A few columns of marble, of granite, and of porphyry, lie unheeded round a small cove, now the only landing-place, while mounds of sand, thinly strewn with architectural fragments, alone point out the ancient circuit of the town. And is this all that remains to tell the tale of ancient Tyre, the early seat of civilisation, the empress of the waves? Could this dreary coast have poured forth dauntless navigators to explore distant regions; this cheerless waste, could it ever have been the patrimony of "merchant-princes?" Could this little territory have been the emporium of the commerce of the world?[a]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

1—6. (1, 2) lamentation, or funeral dirge.[a] (3) entry, lit. *entries.* Ancient Tyre had two ports. It was a harbour to and from which ships went from all parts of the Mediterranean, and connected seas. perfect beauty, completely fitted, and grandly adorned. (4) midst . . seas, *lit.* "in the heart of the sea."[b] (5) Senir, the Amorite name for Mt. Hermon.[c] (6) Bashan, a district celebrated for its oaks. company . . ivory, this is better trans. "They have made thy rowing-benches of ivory inlaid in the best boxwood." isles of Chittim,[d] phrase for Greece and the Grecian islands.

A state of sin is a state of death (v. 3).—1. We are all destitute of spiritual life: 2. The Word of God is the appointed means of communicating spiritual life; 3. The influence of the Holy Spirit is indispensable to the production of spiritual life; 4. The influence of the Holy Spirit is to be obtained through prayer; 5. We have every encouragement to pray for the influence of the Holy Spirit; 6. The consequences of the outpouring of the influence of the Holy Spirit will be beneficial and glorious.[e]

Ancient Tyre.—The Saracens and Turks were the unconscious

a "This alludes to the mournful ditties used at funerals, wherein the mourning women recounted everything that was valuable or praiseworthy belonging to the deceased, and then lamented his loss."—*Lowth.*

b "Tyre, in consequence of her sea-girt position, separated by a strait of half a mile from the mainland, is described as a ship built of the best materials, and manned with the best mariners

instruments who carried these prophecies into their fulfilment: they utterly destroyed Sidon and Tyre, that they might not afford further refuge to the crusaders. There were two harbours, formed by the island—one towards the north, and the other towards the south; and there was a passage between the island and the shore from the one to the other. The island is represented by Pliny as having been four miles in circumference, but the peninsula upon which the present town is situated is of much less extent. It would therefore appear that it is built, for the most part, upon the mole thrown up by Alexander, including a small portion of the original island. There is thus enough of the rock left in existence for the fishers to spread their nets upon, while the principal area, once mantled with palaces and alive with a busy population, has been swept into "the midst of the waters," and can be built no more. The disappearance of the island has caused the destruction of the harbours; and as all protection to shipping is now taken away, Tyre can never again rise to eminence as "the mart of nations." There are still two small rocks in the sea, to which the island probably extended; and as the fishermen's boats can approach them in calm weather, they seem to invite the spreading of nets upon their surface. I and my companions sailed over the present harbour in a small boat, to examine the columns that may clearly be seen under the water on a fine day, but the sea was too rough to allow us to discover many of them. The present town is walled, and is of very modern date. The space inside is in a great measure open, and the houses are mean. The governor's residence is the only respectable building. There are many columns near the small harbour, and others on the opposite side of the peninsula, but there is no ruin of ancient date the plan of which can be traced. We saw in a garden a granite column of one block, that measured thirty feet in length, and the diameter was in proportion. The eastern end of the cathedral is still standing. We ascended to the top of the ruin by a spiral staircase, and from thence had a view of the town. The burial-ground is near. From this situation the houses had a singular appearance, as the roofs are all flat, and were then verdant with a rich covering of grass. Upon the plain there are the remains of an extensive aqueduct. The mole appears like a mere collection of sand, but beneath there may be some construction of more enduring materials.

7—11. (7) **fine linen**, Ge. xli. 42. **spreadest forth**, as they sail, to catch the wind.[a] **blue and purple**, *i.e.* material dyed with costly *murex-dyes*.[b] **isles of Elishah**, Ge. x. 4. (8) **Arvad**, Ge. x. 18. (9) **Gebal**, a province of Phœnicia, near Tyre.[c] **calkers**, stoppers of chinks; it was their business to make the vessels water-tight. (10) **Persia**, Heb. *Pāras*. *Leid and Phut*, prob. in Africa, Nah. iii. 9. **hanged . . thee**, it was customary to ornament the walls with weapons. (11) **Gammadims**, an unknown nation. The word may mean, *watchmen*.

Eastern soldiers in time of peace.—The Eastern soldiers in time of peace are disposed of about the walls of places, and particularly in the towers, and at the gates. Niebuhr tells us that the foot-soldiers of the imam of Yemem have very little to do in times of peace, any more than the cavalry: some of them mount guard at the dela's, or governor's: they are also employed at the gates and upon the towers. Van Egmont and Heyman give a similar

and skilful pilots, but at last in tempestuous seas wrecked."—*Fausset.*

c De. iii. 9. *Virgil* mentions the fir tree as especially useful for ships, the cedar and cypress for houses.

d Je. ii. 10.

vv. 1—4. *J. Hunt*, 195.

e *G. Brooks.* "O sin! how hast thou cursed us! Thou hast thrown up a barrier between ourselves and God. With thy chilling breath thou hast extinguished the light of our household joys; thou hast unstrung our harp, and filled the air with discordant cries; thou hast unsheathed the sword, and bathed it in human blood; thou hast dug every grave in the bosom of the fair earth; but for thee, we should not have known the name of widow or orphan, tear and sigh, sorrow and death; but for thee, our hearts had been untorn by a pang, and our joy pure as the ecstasies of heaven."—*Dr. J. Parker.*

a Caligula, the extravagant Roman emperor, furnished his pleasure-boats with costly sails and other expensive ornaments.'—*Suetonius.*

b This was used for awnings over the deck.

c 1 Ki. v. 18; Ps. lxxxiii. 8.

v. 7 *Bp. Wordsworth*, 314.

v. 11. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 671.

d Harmer.

account. Sandys, speaking of the decorations of one of the gates of the imperial seraglio in Constantinople, tells us that it is hung with shields and scimetars. Through this gate people pass to the divan, where justice is administered; and these are the ornaments of this public passage.[d]

12—16. (12) Tarshish, prob. Tartessus in Spain. Ge. x. 4. Spain was rich in metals. traded in thy fairs, or "did barter with thee."[a] (13) Javan, Greece. Tubal, and Meshech, "the Moschi and Tibareni, whose habitation was near the Euxine Sea."[b] persons of men, *i.e.* slaves. (14) Togarmah, Armenia, Ge. x. 2. (15) Dedan, Ge. x. 7. (16) emeralds, or carbuncle. coral, poss. *silk*, or precious stones, are meant by the word. agate, Is. liv. 12.

The site of ancient Tyre.—The present peninsula, once the site of this splendid city, anciently estimated at three miles in circumference, but apparently of somewhat less extent, is now a dreary waste, distinguished only by hillocks and furrows; and the memorable isthmus, then so laboriously constructed, has become less conspicuous from the augmentation of its width, by the gradual accumulation of sand. Its once vaunted port is now so effectually choked, that only small boats can approach the shore, although, amidst the waves, the foundations are still visible of the massive walls that formed its fortified boundaries, leaving only a narrow entrance secured by a chain. Near the landing-place, a few tolerable houses face the sea, and similar ones are sparingly distributed in other directions. An insignificant bazaar offers few temptations even to those who seek ordinary commodities, and the diverging streets are little more than circuitous alleys, capriciously winding between high walls, as if concealment alone afforded security. Here and there a low door opens into an orchard or paddock, but more frequently into a small court, surrounded with miserable hovels, evidently the abodes of abject poverty. Occasionally an unclosed door exhibits a court of larger dimensions, where a few rude implements of husbandry, and the less meagre looks of better-clad occupants, betoken a state somewhat approaching to comfort and ease. Little cultivation, however, is perceptible near the town; of commercial activity there is no sign; listless groups fill every vacant space; and fishermen no longer "spread their nets" on the shore. Hence it becomes difficult to conjecture how a population, scarcely removed from indigence, can here subsist, notwithstanding the temperate habits of the East, which demand little more than a morning and evening repast of fresh-baked cakes, sometimes eaten with a sort of pottage made of lentils, onions, etc., and sometimes merely with a draught of water, or a little fruit.

17—21. (17) wheat of Minnith, 1 Ki. v. 9—11. Minnith is in the country of the Ammonites, wh. was famous for its cornlands.[a] Pannag, not known as a place. Poss. it means some kind of gum or ointment. balm, for wh. Gilead was famous.[b] (18) Damascus, the chief city of Syria. Helbon, or Chalybon,[c] a district in Syria famous for its wine. (19) Dan, poss. should be *Vedan*, the modern *Aden*. Javan, poss. a Greek settlement in Arabia. bright iron, *i.e.* wrought iron. cassia, Ex. xxx. 24. calamus, Ex. xxx. 23. (20) precious clothes, perhaps "saddle-cloths." (21) Kedar, Ge. xxv. 13.

a Fairbairn.
b Bochart.
"Each group of shops is called a market."—*Van Lennep.*
"The domestic utensils of the Orientals are nearly always brass: and to these they often refer as a sign of property. 'He is a rich man; his house is full of brass vessels.' 'Begone! fellow, I have more brass in my house than would purchase all thy property.' 'The miserable man has not a brass dish in his house.'"—*Roberts.*

The desolate appearance of Soor from the sea—a straggling, repulsive village of low scattered dwellings, with a few squalid inhabitants loitering on the beach—is in gloomy contrast with the gorgeous descriptions of insular Tyre, before Alexander effected its destruction by the daring expedient of uniting it with the continent.

a 2 Chr. xxvii. 2.

b Je. viii. 25.

c Now *Aleppo.*

"It was a beautiful truth which our forefathers

Religion for business.—The earnest spirit of business (and men must be earnest, or they will do nothing),—the earnest spirit of business must be met and controlled, must be suffused and sanctified, by a still more earnest spirit of religion. A hollow and heartless piety can never guide such a business spirit as Hale possessed, and such as, in these days especially, all successful men must possess. Strength must be combined with strength: earnestness must control earnestness; zeal must pierce into, and exalt and purify zeal; faith in eternal things, in the soul, in God, in Christ, in the Spirit, in heaven, must be clear, eagle-eyed, seeing at a distance, looking through clouds and storm; love to God must be a blazing fire like that on Elijah's altar, which licked up the water, dust, and stones that filled the trenches. Say not such mighty faith, such fervent love, are impossible in this world of bustle, toil, and care; for Hale has demonstrated that the thing was practicable; and so has William Wilberforce: and so has Mr. Hardcastle the merchant: and so has Thomas Fowell Buxton the brewer; and so has Joseph John Gurney the banker, and many more. Amidst the heats of secular employments, they cooled their burning brows by opening windows that looked into eternity, and let in breezes that came blowing from the land where angels dwell. And when their souls' chariot-wheels were ready to catch fire by the friction of their secular activity, faith in other things, and love to other things, was like cold water dropping down to prevent the flames. The world did not carry them away; did not overpower and conquer and burn them up: they remained, after all, masters of the world and of themselves, through the constant faith they had, that they were the servants of God and of Christ.[d]

22—25. (22) Sheba, in Arabia Felix. Raamah, on the Persian Gulf. (23) Haran, Carrhœ, in N.W. Mesopotamia. Canneh, prob. a town on the Tigris. Eden, in Mesopotamia.[a] Asshur, here prob. the town *Susa*. Chilmad, prob. the *Charmandé* of Xenophon: or Kalwada, near Bagdad. (24) all sorts, or in excellent wares. made of cedar, to give the clothes a fine scent.[b] (25) did sing of thee, or "were the bulwarks of thy traffic."

Infancy of British trade.—In England the progress of commerce was extremely slow, and this country was one of the last nations in Europe to avail itself of its natural commercial advantages. Before the reign of Edward III., all the wool of England, except a small quantity made into coarse cloths for home consumption, was sold to the Flemings or Lombards, and manufactured by them. All foreign goods were brought into England by the Lombard or Hanseatic merchants. The English ports were frequented by ships both from the north and south of Europe; and they tamely allowed foreigners to reap all the profits arising from the supply of their wants. The first commercial treaty of England on record is that with Haquin, king of Norway, in 1217; but the English did not venture to trade in their own ships to the Baltic until the beginning of the fourteenth century; and it was not until the fifteenth that they sent any ships into the Mediterranean, or to the ports of Spain and Portugal. To Edward III. England is indebted for giving the first impulse to commerce, by endeavouring to excite a spirit of industry among his subjects. By alluring Flemish artisans to

symbolised, when, in most of our old market-towns, they have erected a market-cross, as if to teach the buyers and sellers to rule in their actions, and sanctify their gains, by the remembrance of the cross. The Israelites were taught the same in their encampment: every part of the camp looked toward the tabernacle. So the Chinese, though in superstition and ignorance, set up their idols in their shops. 'Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey. There is no time lost in sharpening the scythe.'" —*G. S. Bowes.*

d J. Stoughton.

a 2 Ki. xxi. 12.

b "Still fine clothes are kept in large chests of cypress-wood, whose odour preserves them from the ravages of moths. Ezekiel speaks of such made of cypress." —*Van Lennep.*

Soon after Colbert came into the management of the finances of France, he sent for the principal merchants of that kingdom, and in order to ingratiate himself with them, and to acquire their confidence, he asked what he could do for them? They unanimously answered, "Pray, sir, do nothing! *Laissez-nous*

faire." "Let us do for ourselves."

"Our business must be the main drain of our intellectual activities day by day. It is the channel we have chosen for them; they must flow in it with a diffusive energy, filling every nook and corner."—*Dr. Tulloch.*

c Percy Anec.

a Spk. Com.

b Fausset.

v. 27. *Dr. J. Edwards*, 133.

Sin is to be overcome, not so much by maintaining a direct opposition to it, as by cultivating opposite principles. Would you kill the weeds in your garden, plant it with good seed: if the ground be well occupied there will be less need of the labour of the hoe. If a man wished to quench fire, he might fight it with his hands till he was burnt to death; the only way is to apply an opposite element."—*Andrew Fuller.*

"Behold my tears!—oh, think them pearled drops distilled from the heart!" *Heywood.*

a Eze. xxvi. 15, 16.

b "As men are apt to despise

settle in his dominions, as well as by many wise laws for the encouragement and regulation of trade, he gave a beginning to the woollen manufactures of England; and first turned the active and enterprising genius of his people towards those arts which have raised the English to the highest rank among commercial nations. So rapidly did the commerce of England advance from this time, that in the twenty-eighth year of the same king, the balance of commerce in her favour was nearly equal to £800,000 of our money. "Thus," as Sir William Temple says, "when England had but a very small foreign commerce, we were rich in proportion to our neighbours, by selling so much more than we bought, even though we maintained such mighty wars in France, and carried our victorious arms into the heart of Spain."[c]

26—30. (26) great waters, scenes of peril. east wind, Ps. xlviii. 7. (27) riches, *etc.*, "All who have been enumerated as sharing in and constituting the glory of Tyre are now recounted as partakers in her wreck."[a] (28) suburbs, or precincts; buildings on the adjoining continent. (29) stand . . land, "being cast out of the ships wherein they prided themselves."[b] (30) against thee, better, over thee: on account of thy wreck and ruin. cast . . ashes, the signs of intense and hopeless mourning.

Mourning for the dead.—The Arabs have taken all their modes of manifesting sorrow and mourning from the Hebrews, as is easily proved by comparing the habits of the people at the present day with the accounts in the Bible. When a calamity befalls a family, all their relations, connections, and friends immediately hasten together to console them. This undertaking is commenced by sorrowing with them, and exhibiting every antic sign of grief that comes into their heads, and is concluded by eating. These modes of expressing affliction, public or private, are as follows: first, they break out into desperate cries, which are heard at a great distance (Jer. ix. 12, xxxi. 15), and sing at intervals mournful dirges, imitating the ancients in this matter, likewise 1 Kings xiii. 20; Jer. xxii. 18, xxxix. 5; then to rest their wearied throats, with sad faces, among clouds of tobacco-smoke, they talk over their calamity, cursing their enemies if they are the cause of it, meditating schemes of revenge, and imploring at every moment the aid of God, remaining all the time seated with the mourners on the ground, regardless of comfort, like the friends of Job, when, for seven days and nights, they sat by his side as he lay on the ashes (Job ii. 8—13, iii., iv.); thirdly, they put on their worst clothes, tear them, let their beards grow, and roll themselves on the ground, casting dust and earth upon their heads; the women dye their faces with black, uncover their heads: let their hair fall loose and dishevelled, frequently tearing it: and not satisfied with this, they scratch their faces and hands, and foam at their mouths; they knock their heads against the walls, and rage like maniacs among those engaged in offering consolation, who in their turn act in the same way.

31—36. (31) utterly bald, ch. vii. 18. (32) lamentation, *v.* 1. (33) wares, or merchandise. (34) broken . . seas, *v.* 27. (35) isles,[a] including cities on the neighbouring coasts. (36) hiss, as an expression of insult and derision:[b] or as Chaldee paraphrase, "with astonishment."

The Lombards.—During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the commerce of Europe was almost entirely in the hands of the Italians, more commonly known by the name of Lombards. Companies or societies of Lombard merchants settled in every kingdom. They were taken under the immediate protection of the several governments, and enjoyed extensive privileges and immunities. The operation of the ancient barbarous laws concerning strangers was suspended with respect to them; and in France they were exempted from the *droit d'aubaine*. As the Lombards engrossed the trade of every kingdom in which they settled, they soon became masters of its cash. Money, of course, was in their hands not only a sign of the value of their commodities, but became an object of commerce itself. They dealt largely as bankers, and in an ordinance in the year 1295, we find them styled *mercatores* and *campsores*. The Lombards carried on this as well as some other branches of their commerce with somewhat of that rapacious spirit which is natural to monopolisers who are not restrained by rivalship. An absurd opinion which prevailed in the Middle Ages was, however, in some measure the cause of their exorbitant demands, and may be pleaded in apology for them. Commerce cannot be carried on with advantage, unless the persons who lend a sum are allowed a certain premium for the use of their money, and as a compensation for the risk they run in permitting another to traffic with their stock. This premium is fixed by law in all commercial countries, some of the States of America excepted, and is called the legal interest of money. But the fathers of the Church preposterously applied the prohibitions of usury in Scripture to the payment of legal interest, and condemned it as a sin. The schoolmen, misled by Aristotle, whose sentiments they followed implicitly, and without examination, adopted the same error and enforced it. Thus the Lombards found themselves engaged in a traffic which was deemed criminal and odious, and subject to punishment if detected. They were not satisfied, therefore, with that moderate premium which they might have claimed if their trade had been open and authorised by law. They exacted a sum proportionate to the danger and infamy of a discovery. The Lombards were established in England in the thirteenth century, and carried on an extensive commerce, particularly as bankers, in a street which still bears their name. The three gilt balls which now adorn the shops of pawnbrokers were the arms of the Lombards, and were generally attached to their respective houses in England.[c]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

1—5. (1, 2) prince, or king. His name prob. was *Ittiobalus.*[a] This prince is regarded here as the representative of a proud system. lifted up, in self-confidence and pride. a god, *comp.* Da. iv. 30.[b] Some princes have actually demanded that divine honours should be paid to them. midst . . seas, ch. xxvii. 4. man, and only a man. (3) than Daniel,[c] spoken in irony, ch. xiv. 14. (4) thy wisdom, *etc.*, this represents the prince's boasting and self-esteem, not the actual facts. (5) because . . riches, the usual consequence of riches swiftly gathered is inordinate pride, and carnal reliance on mere temporal wealth.

those in adversity, whom they courted and respected in prosperity."—*Lowth.*

v. 33. *Dr. R. Welton*, 393.

"It is one thing to understand persons, and another thing to understand matters; for many are perfect in men's humours that are not greatly capable of the real part of business, which is the constitution of one that hath studied men more than books. Such men are fitter for practice than for counsel, and they are good but in their own alley: turn them to new men, and they have lost their aim: so as the old rule, to know a fool from a wise man, '*Mitte ambos nudos ad ignotos, et videbis*,' doth scarce hold for them; and, because these cunning men are like haberdashers of small wares, it is not amiss to set forth their shop."—*Bacon.*

c Percy Anec.

a Josephus.

b Also Ac. xii. 21; 2 Th. ii. 4.

"The words are put in the mouth of the speaker to denote his arrogant pride; but the situation of the island city, full of luxury and

beauty, in the midst of the blue water of the Mediterranean, gives force to the expression."—*Spk. Com.*

c Da. i. 17, vi. 3.

See *Dr. E. Apthorp*, ii. 240.

d A. Warwick.

Pride a great enemy to reason.—Pride is the greatest enemy to reason, and discretion the greatest opposite to pride; for while wisdom makes art the ape of nature, pride makes nature the ape of art. The wise man shapes his apparel to his body; the proud man shapes his body by his apparel. 'Tis no marvel, then, if he know not himself, when he is not to-day like him he was yesterday; and less marvel if good men will not know him, when he forgets himself and all goodness. I should fear, while I thus change my shape, lest my Maker should change His opinion, and, finding me not like him He made me, reject me as none of His making. I would any day put off the old cause of my apparel, but not every day put on new-fashioned apparel. I see great reason to be ashamed of my pride, but no reason to be proud of my shame.[d]

6—10. (6) **Lord God**, note that, in the use of this full name is given the assertion that Jehovah is the *only* God. (7) **strangers**, even the Babylonian army, made up of people from unknown regions. (8) **the pit**, or bottom of the sea. The fig. of this *v.* is taken from a sea-fight. (9) **a man**, only a man, and so entirely in the power of the foe. You shall show no Divine powers in the time of trouble, so as to be able to deliver yourself. (10) **uncircumcised**, heathen idolaters as opposed to the covenant people.[a]

a "Thou shalt die by such a remarkable judgment as God usually inflicts upon notorious offenders."—*Lowth.*

"In ways of greatness think on this—that slippery all ambition is."—*Herrick.*

"Towns turned to ashes, fanes involved in fire! These deeds the guilt of rash ambition tell."—*Fawkes.*

Depth of pride.—

Deep is the sea, and deep is hell, but pride mineth deeper;
It is coiled as a poisonous worm about the foundations of the soul,
If thou expose it in thy motives, and track it in thy springs of thought.
Complacent in its own detection, it will seem indignant virtue;
Smoothly it will gratulate thy skill. O subtle anatomist of self,
And spurn at its very being, while it nestleth the deeper in thy bosom.[b]

b "The cherub consecrated to the Lord by the anointing oil."—*Fairbairn.*

11—15. (11, 12) **sealest . . sum**, or completest the perfect pattern. "Thou art the sealer of a perfect structure."[a] (13) **in Eden**, ironically describing the king of Tyre as an Adam, a first of creation. **sardius**, *etc.*, comp. Ex. xxviii. 17—20, xxxix. 8, foll. **tabrets**, or drums. **pipes**, hollow tubes; the accompaniments of festive seasons. (14) **anointed cherub**,[b] or "cherub of unction." **covereth**, as the cherub in the holy of holies overshadoweth the mercy-seat. The cherub was a symbol of perfection. **stones of fire**, *i.e.* bright jewels, such as named *v.* 13. (15) **perfect**, to all appearance, and in thine own estimation.

a "Thou art the consummation of the model of perfection. The king of Tyre, who was the head of the Tyrian community, and completed and crowned its organisation, was like a seal which gave perfection to it."—*Wordsworth.*

Success of satire.—

Of all the ways that wisest men could find
To mend the age, and mortify mankind,
Satire well writ has most successful proved,
And cures, because the remedy is loved.
'Tis hard to write on such a subject more,
Without repeating things oft said before;
Some vulgar errors only we remove,
That stain a beauty which so much we love.
Of well-chose words some take not care enough,
And think they should be, as the subject, rough;

vv. 12—21. *Origen*, iii. 401.

This great work must be more exactly made,
And sharpest thoughts in smoothest words conveyed :
Some think, if sharp enough, they cannot fail,
As if their only business was to rail ;
But human frailty nicely to unfold,
Distinguishes a satire from a scold ;
Rage you must hide, and prejudice lay down :—
A satire's smile is sharper than his frown.[c]

v. 31. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 675.

c *Mulgrave.*

16—19. (16) filled . . violence, swift prosperity often leads to violence, cheating, and extortion. In haste to be rich, virtue and charity are often put aside. as profane, no longer to be regarded as sacred. (17) brightness, or splendour, alluding to the luxuries wh. wealth encourages. lay . . kings, as an example of the end of presumptuous pride. (18) iniquity . . traffic, wh. had become dishonest and overreaching. (19) astonished, at thy ruin.[a]

Profanity.—The crew of a vessel being at port after a very fatiguing day of labour, went on shore to get some refreshment. They were all sitting in one box, talking boisterously, when the eldest of them, remarking to one of the crew that he became worse in his habit of swearing, proposed a fine of one penny on every person who should be guilty of the same crime. This was received with approbation by them all, except the individual who had been reproved, and whose conduct led to the measure. He, however, said if they would excuse him that night, he would willingly join them on the morrow. He declared to his companions, that he would "have this evening's liberty." But God set the seal of death upon him. Shortly after this assertion he left his companions, and by them was seen no more in life. The crew having seen nothing of him the evening he had parted from them, nor the next day and night, they suspected that he must have fallen overboard when returning to the ship. A search was made for him, and in little more than a quarter of an hour his lifeless body was found.[b]

a Comp. Re. xvii. 16, xviii. 9.

v. 17. *Dr. T. Leland,* iii. 167.

v. 18. *Bp. Wilberforce,* 94.

"The sins of our youth hasten us to the sins of our age ; and the sins of our age look back upon the follies of our youth ; pride feathers my ambition, and ambition swells my pride ; gluttony is a pander to my lust, and my lust a steward to my gluttony. Sins seldom end where they begin, but run on, till they be infinite and innumerable."—*Anthony Farindon.*

b *Whitecross.*

20—23. (20, 21) Zidon,[a] the neighbouring, but older[b] Phœnician city. It was famous for its fishery, and increased in wealth after Tyre was humbled. (22) against thee, bec. of the idolatries wherewith the Zidonians had corrupted Israel. (23) pestilence, another agent used in executing the Divine vengeance on nations.

Plague at Malta.—All the other miseries of mankind have no parallel to the calamities of the plague. The sympathy which relatives feel for the wounded and the dying in battle is but the shadow of that heartrending affliction inspired by the ravages of pestilence. Conceive in the same house the beholder, the sickening, and dying. To help is death ! To refuse assistance is inhuman ! It is like the shipwrecked mariner striving to rescue his drowning companion, and sinking with him into the same oblivious grave. In 1813, such was the virulence with which the plague raged at Malta, such the certain destruction which attended the slightest contact with the infected, that at last every better feeling of the heart was extinguished in a desire of self-preservation ; and nobody could be procured to perform the melancholy offices which make up the funeral train of sickness and death. In this woeful emergency a band

a Joel iii. 4.

b Ge. x. 19.

"If those whom the wisdom of our laws has condemned to die, had been detected in their rudiments of robbery, they might, by proper discipline, and useful labour, have been disentangled in their habits; they might have escaped all the temptations to subsequent crimes ; and passed their days in reparation and penitence ; and detected they might all have

been, had the prosecutors been certain their lives would have been spared. I believe every thief will confess that he has been more than once seized and dismissed; and that he has sometimes ventured upon capital crimes, because he knew that those whom he injured would rather connive at his escape than cloud their minds with the horrors of his death."—*Johnson.*

c Percy Anec.

of daring and ferocious Greeks came over to the island, and, clad in oiled leather, volunteered their services with very happy effect; but their number was so small, that recourse was obliged to be had to some French and Italian prisoners of war for assistance. What will not man for liberty perform? Tempted by the promise of a handsome reward and their liberation at the disappearance of the plague, numbers of these unfortunate captives engaged in the perilous task of waiting on the sick, burying the dead, cleaning and whitewashing the infected houses, burning their furniture, etc. Providence appeared to have taken these children of despair under its special protection; few of them comparatively fell victims to their humane intrepidity. Mr. Murdo Young, in his notes to his poem of *Antonia*, mentions that he saw some of them, when duty led them near the prison where they had left their less enterprising companions confined, climb up to the chimney tops of the infected houses, and being

"Free from plague, in danger's dread employ,
Wave to their friends in openness of joy."[c]

14—16. (24) pricking brier, "first ensnaring the Israelites to sin, and then being made the instrument of punishing them." See Nu. xxxiii. 55. (25) gathered . . scattered, here the Lord's mercy to Israel is set in contrast with His dealings with the surrounding nations.[a] (26) build houses, Is. lxv. 21.

The record of our lives.—With every turn of the turnstile on Waterloo Bridge a record is made against the gatekeeper, and he cannot recall or obliterate it. Every movement of the wind over Greenwich observatory, steady or capricious, fast or slow, is self-registered, with pencil and paper, by an apparatus communicating to a room below, in which blank paper is presented to the pencil by clockwork, and these autobiographical memoirs are carefully preserved. So constant and unerring is the record kept in the book of God's remembrance concerning all our actions, and even "every idle word that men shall speak" (Matt. xii. 36).

a "This transition from the enemies to the people of God is made to close the portion of the prophecies against the heathen, which concerns the nations in the immediate vicinity of the Israelites, 'them that despise them round about them,' before passing to the more distant Egypt."—*Spk. Com.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

1—7. (1) tenth year, *i.e.* of the captivity. Jerusalem had, at this time, been besieged, but not taken. (2) Pharaoh, the common name of the Eg. kings. This was *Hophra*, or *Apries*, in the Greek.[a] (3) great dragon, Heb. *tannim*, prob. the crocodile,[b] the chief creature of the Nile made a symbol of the king. midst . . rivers, the royal city, *Sais*, was situated in the Delta, among the many branches or streams of the Nile. river . . myself, the expression of Hophra's boastful pride.[c] (4) hooks, Job xli. 2. fish . . rivers, a fig. for the allies of Egypt. stick . . scales, a fig. for the fate of Hophra, whose subjects revolted, and strangled him. (5) thrown, *etc.*, this was the fate of Hophra's army. (6) staff of reed, Is. xxxvi. 6. (7) break, and so utterly fail the Jews in the hour of their need.

Plain preaching.—In the town of Goslar, in the Hartz Mountains, there is in the principal square a fountain, evidently of mediæval date, but the peculiarity of its construction is that no one can reach the water so as to fill a bucket or even get a drink

a "The most powerful king of Egypt next to Psammeticus, whose great grandson he was. He besieged and captured Gaza (Jer. xlvii. 1), and attacked Sidon, and encountered the king of Tyre in an engagement by sea, and recovered much of the influence wh. Eg. had lost since its defeat at Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar, in the fourth year

to quench his thirst. Both the jets, and the basin into which they fall, are above the reach of any man of ordinary stature; yet the fountain was intended to supply the public with water, and it fulfils its design by a method which we never saw in use before: every person brings a spout or trough with him long enough to reach the top of the fountain and bring the water down into his pitcher. We are afraid that all our reverence for antiquity did not prevent the full exercise of our risible faculties; sixpennyworth of mason's work with a chisel would have made the crystal stream available to all; but no, every one must bring a trough, or go away unsupplied. When preachers of the Gospel talk in so lofty a style that each hearer needs to bring a dictionary, they remind us of the absurd fountain of Goslar. The use of six-syllabled jaw-breaking words is simply a most ludicrous vanity. A little labour on the part of such pedants would save a world of profitless toil to their hearers, and enable those uneducated persons who have no means of reaching the preacher's altitude to derive some measure of instruction from his ministry.[d]

8—11. (8) a sword, fig. for invasion of Chaldæan army.[a] (9) because, *etc.*, *i.e.* it must be distinctly understood that the judgment will come upon him for his impiety and his insolence. (10) tower of Syene,[b] or modern *Assouan*, near to which are the First Cataracts. (11) forty years, an ideal number. The terms of this verse indicate a period of national degradation, and should not be too literally pressed. (12) scatter, *etc.*, "the scattering was to be mainly the dissipation of their power."

The precision of prophetic language.—Wonderful precision in the accomplishment of prophecy may be noticed in the cases of Egypt (Ezek. xxix. 10, 15, xxx. 6, 12, 13), of Ethiopia (Nah. iii. 8—10), and other nations of antiquity. Indeed, so exactly does the history of the four great monarchies correspond with the prophecies of Daniel (ii. 39, 40, vii. 17—24, viii. and ix.) that the celebrated infidel Porphyry (A.D. 233—304) could only evade the force of their evidence by declaring, contrary to all evidence, that they were written long after the events, "which is as absurd as if any one should maintain that the works of Virgil were not written under Augustus, but after his time; for the Book of Daniel was as public, as widely dispersed, and as universally received as any book could ever possibly be."[c]

13—16. (13) gather, *etc.*, comp. Je. xlvi. 26. (14) land of Pathros, the *Thebaid*, or Upper Egypt.[a] base kingdom, in a depressed or low state: poss. meaning a tributary kingdom. (15) basest of kingdoms, travellers still attest the "deplorable and debased state of this country."[b] (16) confidence, *etc.*, referring to the disposition to trust Egypt in the conflict with Nebuchadnezzar. look after, or seek aid from.

Egyptian splendours.—The great temple at Karnak has twelve principal entrances, each of which is composed of several propyla and colossal gateways, besides other buildings attached to them, in themselves larger than most other temples. One of the propyla is entirely of granite, adorned with the most finished hieroglyphics. On each side of many of them there have been colossal statues of basalt and granite, from twenty to thirty feet in height, some of which are in the attitude of sitting, while others are standing erect. A double range of colossal sphinxes

of Jehoiakim (2 Ki. xxiv. 7; Je. xlvi. 2)."—*Wordsworth.*

b On Roman coins the crocodile is the emblem of Egypt.

c *Herodotus* says that this king persuaded himself that even the gods could not dispossess him of his kingdom.

d *Spurgeon.*

a "Prob. Nebuc. was encouraged by the revolt of Amasis against Pharaoh and Hophra, to invade Egypt, and was thus enabled to subdue it with greater ease."—*Wilkinson.*

b "Syene itself being the last town of Egypt towards the frontier of Ethiopia, this ver. does not convey the sense of the original, wh. is correctly given by *Newcome*—'From Migdol to Syene, even to the borders of Ethiopia.' Migdol, rendered 'tower' in our vers., but which should be preserved as a proper name, was in the north of Egypt, while Syene was at its southern frontier; so 'from Migdol to Syene' describes the whole of the country."—*Mador.*

c *Horne.*

a Ge. x. 14; Is. xi. 11.

b "Upon its revolting from the Persians it was finally subdued

by Ochus, the Persian emperor, and has been governed by strangers ever since."—*Lowth.*

"On the failure of the Persian empire, it became subject to the Macedonians, after them to the Romans, then to the Saracens, then to the Mamelukes, and it is now a province of the Turkish empire."—*Prideaux.*

"Accurst ambition, how dearly have I bought you!"—*Dryden.*

c Horne.

extends across the plain from the temple at Luxor (a distance of nearly two miles), which terminates at Karnak in a most magnificent gateway, fifty feet in height which still remains unimpaired. From this gateway the great temple was approached by an avenue of fifty lofty columns, one of which only now remains, leading to a vast propylon in front of the portico. The interior of this portico presents a *coup d'œil*, which surpasses any other that is to be found among the remains of Egyptian architecture. Twelve columns, sixty feet high, and of a beautiful order, form an avenue through the centre of the building, like the nave of a Gothic cathedral, and they are flanked on each side by sixty smaller ones, ranged in six rows, which are seen through the intervals in endless perspective. The walls are covered with bas-reliefs of a similar character with those found in the other ancient Egyptian temples. Such is the mass of disjointed fragments collected together in these magnificent relics of ancient art, that more than human power would appear to have caused the overthrow of the strongholds of superstition. Some have imagined that the ruin was caused by the instantaneous concussion of an earthquake. Whether this conjecture be well founded or erroneous, the Divine predictions against Egypt have been literally accomplished. "The land of Egypt" has been made "desolate and waste;" "judgments" have been executed "in No," whose "multitude" has been "cut off;" and No is rent asunder.[c]

17—21. (17) seven and twentieth, *see* v. 1. This is a later prophecy, inserted here to show that Nebuchadnezzar would fulfil the previous threatenings on Egypt. (18) serve, *etc.*, not merely to carry out a great undertaking, but to fulfil a Divine commission against Tyre. It was a long and exhausting siege of thirteen years. head . . peeled, figs. to express the hard service of the soldiers.[a] no wages, &c. the inhabitants succeeded in removing their treasures to New Tyre, half a mile distant from the shore. (19) give . . Egypt, compensating Nebuc. with the spoils of Egypt. (20) his labour, *i.e.* as the hire for his labour in the siege of Tyre. for me, as agents in fulfilling My purposes. (21) that day, of Egypt's overthrow. horn, Ps. cxxxii. 17.[b] opening, *etc.*, *i.e.* freedom to speak.[c]

Service done for God rewarded (*vv.* 17—20).—These words furnish us with three reflections. I. The disposal of states and nations is the work of Divine providence. II. That men may serve God really, when they do not serve Him by design. III. We shall never be losers by anything we do for God.[d]

Uncovering the head.—"During the war which happened about eight years ago between the Towara and the Maazy Bedouins, who live in the mountains between Cairo and Cosseir, a party of the former happened to be stationed here with their families. They were surprised one morning by a troop of their enemies, while assembled in the sheikh's tent to drink coffee. Seven or eight of them were cut down: the sheikh himself, an old man, seeing escape impossible, sat down by the fire; when the leader of the Maazy came up, and cried out to him to throw down his turban, and his life should be spared. The generous sheikh, rather than do what, according to Bedouin notions, would have stained his reputation ever after, exclaimed, 'I shall not uncover my head before my enemies;' and was immediately killed with the thrust of a lance."[e]

a "Till the heads of the soldiers became bald with continual wearing their helmets, and the skin was worn off their shoulders with carrying earth to raise mounts and fortifications against it."—*Lowth.*

b 1 Sa. ii. 1; Job xvi. 15.

c "When thy predictions shall have come to pass, thy words shall be more heeded."—*Fausset, vv.* 17—20. *W. Jay*, ix. 429; *J. Summerfield*, 72.

d W. Jay.

"The eagle-winged pride of sky-aspiring and ambitious thoughts."—*Shakespeare.*

e Burckhardt's Travels in Syria.

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

1—5. (1, 2) howl ye, *i.e.* ye Egyptians. woe worth,[a] or alas! (3) near, Joel ii. 2, 3. cloudy day, darkened with calamities. time . . heathen, or for judging the heathen. (4) pain, marg. *fear.* · foundations, *i.e.* her strong forts and citadels, on whose stability she rests. (5) Ethiopia, *etc.*, Heb. *Cush*, *Phut*, and *Lud*.[b] mingled people,[c] the mercenary forces of Egypt from various nations; or foreigners settled in Egypt. Chub, the site is unknown.[d] It may be connected with *Coptos*. men . . league, *i.e.* Jews who had settled in Egypt.

Egypt.—Egypt was one of the most ancient and one of the mightiest of kingdoms, and the researches of the traveller are still directed to explore the unparalleled memorials of its power. No nation, whether of ancient or modern times, has ever erected such great and durable monuments. While the vestiges of other ancient monarchies can hardly be found amid the mouldering ruins of their cities, those artificial mountains, visible at the distance of thirty miles, the pyramids of Egypt, without a record of their date, have withstood, unimpaired, all the ravages of time. The dynasty of Egypt takes precedence, in antiquity, of every other. No country ever produced so long a catalogue of kings. The learning of the Egyptians was proverbial. The number of their cities, and the population of their country, as recorded by ancient historians, almost surpass credibility. Nature and art united in rendering it a most fertile region. It was called the granary of the world. It was divided into several kingdoms, and their power often extended over many of the surrounding countries. Yet the knowledge of all its greatness and glory deterred not the Jewish Prophets from declaring that Egypt would become "a base kingdom, and never exalt itself any more among the nations." And the literal fulfilment of every prophecy affords as clear a demonstration as can possibly be given, that each and all of them are the dictates of inspiration.[e]

6—9. (6) pride . . down, travellers tell how impressive are the ruins of Egypt.[a] tower, *etc.*, see ch. xxix. 10. (7) desolate, *etc.*, ch. xxix. 12. (8) set a fire, a fig. of Divine judgment.[b] (9) messengers, *etc.*, Is. xviii. 1, 2. careless Ethiopians, they were dwelling in fancied security.[c]

Egypt.—Egypt became entirely subject to the Persians about three hundred and fifty years previous to the Christian era. It was afterwards subdued by the Macedonians, and was governed by the Ptolemies for the space of two hundred and ninety-four years; until about thirty years before Christ, it became a province of the Roman empire. It continued long in subjection to the Romans—tributary first to Rome, and afterwards to Constantinople. It was transferred, A.D. 641, to the dominion of the Saracens. In 1250 the Mamelukes deposed their rulers, and usurped the command of Egypt. A mode of government the most singular and surprising that ever existed on earth was established and maintained. Each successive ruler was raised to supreme authority, from being a stranger and a slave. No son of the former ruler—no native of Egypt succeeded to the sovereignty; but a chief was chosen from among a new race of

a Comp. *Sir W. Scott's* "Woe worth the chase; woe worth the day, that cost thy life, my gallant grey."

b Je. xlvi. 9.

c Je. xxv. 20.

d The Cubii are mentioned by Ptolemy as a people of Mareotis, a province of Egypt.

"Ambition! the desire of active souls, that pushes them beyond the bounds of nature, and elevates the hero to the gods; that can inform the souls of beardless boys, and ripen 'em to men in spite of nature."—*Rowe.*

"White-rob'd ambition leads, ignobly proud, to cringe for votes, and coax the fickle crowd."—*Howes.*

e Keith.

a "Thebes appeared to me like entering a city of giants, who, after a long conflict, were all destroyed, leaving the ruins as the only proofs of their former existence."—*Belzoni.*

b Ps. lxxviii. 63; Je. vii. 20; Am. i. 4.

c "The cataracts interposing between them and Egypt should not save them."—*Fausset.*

Ju. viii. 11; Zep. ii. 15.

imported slaves. When Egypt became tributary to the Turks in 1517, the Mamelukes retained much of their power, and every pacha was an oppressor and a stranger. During all these ages, every attempt to emancipate the country, or to create a prince of the land of Egypt, has proved abortive, and has often been fatal to the aspirant. Though the facts relative to Egypt form too prominent a feature in the history of the world to admit of contradiction or doubt, yet the description of the fate of that country, and of the form of its government, shall be left to the testimony of those whose authority no infidel will question, and whom no man can accuse of adapting their descriptions to the predictions of the event.[d]

10—12. (10) multitude, or large population. Egypt was noted for the swift increase of her people. (11) terrible . . nations, ch. xxviii. 7. (12) rivers dry, *i.e.* the artificial canals constructed for purposes of irrigation, and threading the whole land. This indicates a time of drought which would prepare the way for the invaders.[a]

Egypt.—Gibbon and Volney are again our witnesses of the facts:—"Such is the state of Egypt. Deprived twenty-three centuries ago of her natural proprietors, she has seen her fertile fields successively a prey to the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Georgians, and, at length, the race of Tartars distinguished by the name of the Ottoman Turks. The Mamelukes, purchased as slaves, and introduced as soldiers, soon usurped the power and elected a leader. If their first establishment was a singular event, their continuance is not less extraordinary. They are replaced by slaves brought from their original country. The system of oppression is methodical. Everything the traveller sees or hears reminds him he is in the country of slavery and tyranny." "A more unjust and absurd constitution cannot be devised than that which condemns the natives of a country to perpetual servitude, under the arbitrary dominion of strangers and slaves. Yet such has been the state of Egypt above five hundred years. The most illustrious sultans of the Baharite and Borgite dynasties were themselves promoted from the Tartar and Circassian bands; and the four-and-twenty beys, or military chiefs, have ever been succeeded, not by their sons, but by their servants." These are the words of Volney and of Gibbon. And what did the ancient Prophets foretell? "I will lay the land waste, and all that there is therein, by the hands of strangers. I the Lord have spoken it. And there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt. The sceptre of Egypt shall depart away." The prophecy adds: "They shall be a base kingdom—it shall be the basest of kingdoms." After the lapse of two thousand and four hundred years from the date of this prophecy, a scoffer at religion, but an eyewitness of the facts, thus describes the self-same spot: "In Egypt there is no middle class, neither nobility, clergy, merchants, landholders. A universal air of misery, manifest in all the traveller meets, points out to him the rapacity of oppression, and the distrust attendant upon slavery. The profound ignorance of the inhabitants equally prevents them from perceiving the causes of their evils, or applying the necessary remedies. Ignorance, diffused through every class, extends its effects to every species of moral and physical know-

"Much the raging thirst of fame exceeds the generous warmth that prompts to worthy deeds."—*Gifford.*

d *Keith.*

a "I will destroy the strength of Egypt; the metaphor is taken from the decrease or failing of the Nile, upon whose overflowing all the plenty and prosperity of Egypt depended."—*Lowth.*
"Many of the ancient canals are now filled with sand, and the desert is fast encroaching, in very many places, on the once cultivated parts."—*Gadsby.*
"The same sun which gilds all nature, and exhilarates the whole creation, does not shine upon disappointed ambition. It is something that rays out of darkness, and inspires nothing but gloom and melancholy. Men in this deplorable state of mind find a comfort in spreading the contagion of their spleen. They find an advantage, too; for it is a general popular error to imagine the loudest complainers for the public to be the most anxious for its welfare. If such persons can answer the ends of relief and profit to themselves, they are apt to be careless enough about either the means

ledge. Nothing is talked of but intestine troubles, the public misery, pecuniary extortions, bastinadoes, and murders. Justice herself puts to death without formality." [b]

13—19. (13) destroy their idols,[a] idolatry is the great sin wh. calls for Divine vengeance on nations. Noph, or Memphis.[b] a prince, *i.e.* one of a native dynasty. (14) Pathros, Upper Egypt; ch. xxix. 14. Zoan, or Tunis.[c] No, or Thebes.[d] (16) Sin, or Pelusium.[e] (17) Aven, or Heliopolis.[f] Pi-beseth, now *Tel* Bastah, in the Delta. The *Bubastis* of Herodotus, the seat of one of the annual festivals. (18) Tehaphnehes, or *Tahpanhes*, Je. ii. 16. break .. yokes, *i.e.* those imposed *by* Egypt. cloud, *v.* 3. (19) thus, in this thorough and complete manner.

Prophecies concerning Egypt.—Can any words be more free from ambiguity, or could any events be more wonderful in their nature, or more unlikely or impossible to have been foreseen by man than these prophecies concerning Egypt? The long line of its kings commenced with the first ages of the world, and while it was yet unbroken its final termination was revealed. The very attempt once made by infidels to show, from the recorded number of its monarchs, and the durations of their reigns, that Egypt was a kingdom previous to the Mosaic era of the deluge, places the wonderful nature of these predictions respecting it in the most striking view. And the previous experience of two thousand years, during which period Egypt had never been without a prince of its own, seemed to preclude the possibility of those predicted events which the experience of the last two thousand years has amply verified. Though it had often tyrannised over Judæa and the neighbouring nations, the Jewish Prophets foretold that its own sceptre would depart away; and that that country of kings (for the number of its contemporary as well as successive monarchs may warrant the appellation) would never have a prince of its own, and that it would be laid waste by the hands of strangers. They foretold that it should be a base kingdom—the basest of kingdoms; that it should be desolate itself and surrounded by desolation; and that it should never exalt itself any more among the nations. They described its ignominious subjection and unparalleled baseness, notwithstanding that its past and present degeneracy bears not a more remote resemblance to the former greatness and pride of its power, than the frailty of its mud-walled fabric now bears to the stability of its imperishable pyramids. Such prophecies, accomplished in such a manner, prove, without a comment, that they must be the revelation of the omniscient Ruler of the universe.[g]

20—23. (20) eleventh year, *comp.* ch. xxix. 1, xxx. 1. (21) Pharaoh, *i.e. Hophra*, as in ch. xxix. roller, or bandage. (22) arms, both of them,[a] to render him utterly helpless. (23) scatter, ch. xxix. 12.

Self-destruction.—As Noah was drunk with his own wine, Goliath beheaded with his own sword, the rose destroyed by the canker bred in itself, the breast by a self-bred wolf, the apple by the worm, the dam's belly eaten through by the young vipers, Agrippina killed by Nero to whom she gave breath, so we are undone by ourselves, our destruction is of ourselves. The bitter

or the consequences."—*Burke.*

b *Volney.*

a Zec. xiii. 2.

b "Famous for the temple of *Phah* (the god of fire), and for the worship of Osiris and Apis (from the conjunction of which came Osiri-apis, or Serapis), and the centre of Egyptian idolatry."—*Wordsworth.*

Comp. Is. xix. 3; Je. ii. 16; Ho. ix. 6.

c Ps. lxxviii. 12.

d Je. xlvi. 25.

e Ex. xvi. 1.

f Ge. xli. 45; Je. xliii. 13; Ho. iv. 15.

g 13. *Dr. Worthington, Boyle Lec.* i. 346.

"There is a fire and motion of the soul but once kindled, quenchless evermore."—*Byron.*

"Obstinate ambition leads through all the rugged roads of barren lore."—*Armstrong.*

g *Keith.*

a The king of Babylon had previously dispossessed the king of Egypt of all his new conquests. This was the breaking of one arm. The attack on Egypt itself was the breaking of the other.

"The towering hope of eagle-eyed ambition."—*Smollet.*

b Spencer.

"Gigantic phantom of the brain, ambition, breeding monstrous hopes and fears."—*Phillips.*

"Ambition is the mind's immodesty."—*Davenant.*

waters of Marah and Meribah that we drink so deep of are of our own mingling and embittering; the rods that scourge us are of our own making. Sin, like a friar, whips itself: punishment is connate, innate to sin. We may thank our own folly for our own bane.[b]

24—26. (24) strengthen, so that he may fully execute My mission. groan, as one dying of his wounds. (25) know . . Lord, bee. God has a high spiritual purpose, even in His judgments of heathen nations. scatter, ch. xxix. 12.

Responsibility of destruction.—A physician, hearing of a sick man who is likely to die, takes some remedy, and goes and knocks at the sick man's door. If the sick man does not let him in he dies; but he is his own destroyer. The physician did what he could, but the sick man would not be cured. This is the case of the impenitent sinner, at whose heart Christ knocks in vain, till sudden destruction comes upon the neglecter. He might have been saved, but would not be.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

1—5. (1) third month, rather more than a month before Jerus. was taken.[a] (2) multitude, or people over whom he reigns. Like king like people. (3) Assyrian, king of the country, whose capital was Nineveh.[b] cedar, the kingly among trees. shadowing shroud, or garment of leaves casting a wide shadow. thick boughs, better as LXX., the clouds. (4) waters, the several branches of the navigable Tigris. deep, *i.e.* deep river, with its shallower streams and canals. As with Egypt, so with Nineveh, the river was the source of fertility. (5) therefore, bec. so well nourished.[c] shot forth, better, "when, in flood, the deep water sent forth its streams."

W. Wilberforce, Esq.—The Rev. Joseph Brown, A.M., in his funeral sermon for this excellent man, states that he once met with an instance of his humility which astonished and embarrassed him. One day Mr. W. had kindly given Mr. Brown some advice, who expressed his thankfulness, and added that he should feel indebted if, in conversation or correspondence, he would at all times be his counsellor, and, if necessary, correct him and point out his faults. He suddenly stopped in his walk, and replied, "I will; but you must promise me one thing." "With pleasure," Mr. B. answered, little thinking of the nature of the request. "Well, then," continued Mr. W., "in all your conversation and correspondence with me, be candid and open, and point out my faults."[d]

6—9. (6) fowls, *e'e.*, comp. Da. iv. 12. The figs. of this *v.* intimate that other nations sought the protection of Assyria. (7) fair, or beautiful, as a tree, and as a nation. (8) garden of God, paradise.[a] hide him, *i.e.* overshadow and dwarf him. chestnut, or plane tree. (9) envied him, reference is to the feeling of surrounding nations towards Assyria and Egypt. "All the kings of the East envied him and his greatness."[b]

The plane tree, the chestnut of Scripture.—The Hebrew word *'armôn* occurs twice in the Old Testament (Gen. xxx. 37; Ezek. xxxi. 8). In both cases it is translated chestnut in our version, but more correctly in the Septuagint, plane tree, *i.e.* the

a Je. xxxix. 2.

b "The Assyrian empire, after having been supreme in Asia for four centuries, had been overthrown by the united force of the Babylonians and the Medes, in the year B.C. 606."—*Spk. Com.* "Assyria was a representative of the worldly infidel powers relying on their own strength, opposed to God and His Church, and defying and blaspheming Him. It was therefore the fittest of all powers to be coupled with Egypt."—*Wordsworth.*

c Comp. Ps. i. 3.

d R. T. S.

a Ge. ii. 8; Ps. lxxx. 10.

b Chaldee paraphrase.

"The true ambition there alone resides, where justice vindicates, and wisdom guides; where inward dignity joins out-

Oriental plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*). There can be little doubt of this rendering, which is supported by all critics. We never saw the chestnut in Palestine, excepting planted in orchards in Lebanon; while the plane tree, though local, is frequent by the sides of streams and in plains, both on the coast and in the northern parts of the country. The *'armôn* is in Genesis associated with the willow and poplar, which, like the plane tree, grow on low ground where the soil is rich and humid. It is common on the banks of the Upper Jordan and of the Litany (Leontes), where it overhangs the water. "The chestnut trees (plane trees) were not like his branches," and it is always a noble and beautiful tree. We examined a plane tree, growing in one of the streets of Damascus, more than forty feet in circumference. The foliage is a pale green, the leaves palmate, like those of our common sycamore (which, however, is a very different tree), and its flowers are in clusters of pendulous, rounded balls. It was held sacred by the Greeks, and Herodotus mentions one of enormous size near Sardis, to which Xerxes paid homage. In Ecclus. xxiv. 14, Wisdom is compared to "a plane tree by the water." The Hebrew name, *'armôn*, signifies "naked," and it is a characteristic of the plane tree that it annually sheds its outer bark.

10—14. (10) **thou . . he,** observe the blending of reference to the *tree* and the king. **heart is lifted up,** herein lay the sin that brought the judgment. God did not visit for the prosperity, but for the *pride* which the prosperity engendered.[a] (11) **mighty one,** here referring to Nabupolassar, king of Babylon.[b] (12) **strangers,** the Medes and Babylonians. **his shadow,** *vv.* 3, 6. (13) **fowls,** *i.e.* the wilder fowls, or birds, and the wild animals, shall make home in his desolate ruins. (14) **to the end,** *i.e.* this is the design of the Divine judgments.[c] **stand . . height,** rely on themselves, on their own height.

Conceits of pride.—When a proud man thinks best of himself, then God and man think worst of him; all his glory is but like a vapour, which climbeth as though it would go up to heaven, but when it comes to a little height, it falls down again, and never ascends more. So Adam thought that the fair apple should make him like his Maker, but God resisted his pride, and that apple made him like the serpent that tempted him with it. Absalom thought that rebellion would make him a king, but God resisted his pride, and his rebellion hanged him on a tree.[d]

15—18. (15) **went down,** ch. xxvi. 15. **covered the deep,** as a mourner covers himself with sackcloth.[a] **great waters,** or flood-waters. **mourn,** lit. *to be black.* (16) **shake,** with fear. **to hell,** or Sheol; note the sense in wh. a nation can be said to go down to Sheol, it is a fig. of shameful and hopeless desolation. **comforted,** ref. is to tributary peoples, in measure comforted bec. the great nation shares their fate. (17) **into hell,** *v.* 16. **his arm,** auxiliaries, used for his purposes. (18) **thou like,** *comp. v.* 2. The application is now made to Egypt. **uncircumcised,**[b] ch. xxviii. 10. xxxii. 19, 20.

Baseless pride.—Philip, having made himself master of Potidæa, received three messengers in one day: the first brought him an account of a great victory gained over the Illyrians by

a Pr. viii. 13, xi. 2, xvi. 18.

b "Called the 'mighty one' (*El*, a name of God), bec. he was God's representative and instrument of judgment."—*Fausset.*

c "Thy destruction shall be a warning to other kings and potentates, to deter them from priding themselves in the time of their prosperity."—*Lowth.*

d *Henry Smith.*

a "The deep, the source of Assyria's prosperity (*v.* 4) was made to mourn, being dried up, instead of giving forth its waters, its glad abundance."—*Spk. Com.*

b "As circumcision was an object of mocking to thee, thou shalt lie in the ward state, our purpose good, as our achievement great; where public blessings, public praise attend, where glory is our motive, not our end: wouldst thou be famed? have those high acts in view, brave men would act, though scandal would ensue."—*Young.*

"Strong with wild ambition's madning fires."—*Mickle.*

"Graces that might lull stubborn ambition to inglorious rest."—*Lee.*

midst of the uncircumcised, slain by the sword."—*Grotius.*

c Colton.

his general, Parmenio: the second told him he was proclaimed victor at the Olympic Games; and the third informed him of the birth of Alexander. But there was nothing in all these events that ought to have fed the vanity, or that would have justified the pride of Philip; since, as an elegant writer remarks, "for the first he was indebted to his general; for the second to his horse; and his wife is shrewdly suspected of having helped him to the third."[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

1—5. (1) twelfth year, *etc*, prob. one year and seven months after the destruction of Jerusalem.[a] (2) lamentation, or dirge. thou art, better, "thou wouldest be like a lion, and thou art like a whale," or crocodile.[b] troublest . . feet, as a crocodile on landing and going forth. (3) spread . . net, ch. xii. 13. with a company, *i.e.* the Chaldæans. Their invasion was God's net, *i.e.* God's judgment. (4) leave, *etc.*, comp. ch. xxix. 5. (5) thy height, fig. taken from the high cedar, wh. when prostrate, shall seem to fill up the valleys.

a "Jerusalem was by this time overthrown, and Amasis was beginning his revolt against Pharaoh Hophra."—*Fausset.*

b "Pharaoh should have been like the king of beasts, but he is a mere sea-monster. There is strong irony here, bec. the Eg. king was proud of the comparison between himself and the mighty crocodile."—*Spk. Com.*

"Herodotus relates that in his time they had in Egypt many and various ways of taking the crocodile. Brookes says, 'The manner of taking the crocodile in Siam is by throwing three or four nets across a river at proper distances from each other; that so if he break through the first, he may be caught by one of the others.'"—*Burder.*

c Harmer.

Princes compared to lions (*v.* 2).—Nothing is more common, in the East, than the comparing princes to lions, or better known to those that are acquainted with their writings; but the comparing them to crocodiles, if possessed of naval power, or strong by a watery situation, has hardly ever been mentioned. D'Herbelot, however, cites an Eastern poet, who, celebrating the prowess of Gelaleddin, surnamed Mankberni, and Khovarezme Shah, a most valiant Persian prince, said, "He was dreadful as a lion in the field, and not less terrible in the water than a crocodile." The power of the ancient kings of Egypt seems to be represented after the same manner, by the Prophet Ezekiel, ch. xxix. 3, "Behold I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon (the great crocodile) that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it myself." In this ver. the same Prophet makes use of both the similes, I think, of the panegyrist of Gelaleddin: "Take up a lamentation for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale (a crocodile) in the seas: and thou camest forth with (or from) thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers." It is very odd in our translators to render the original word *tanneem*, whale, and, at the same time, talk of feet; nor, indeed, are rivers the abode of the whale; its bulk is too great to admit of that: the term dragon, which is thrown into the margin, is the preferable version; which word in our language, as the Hebrew word in the original is, I think, generic, and includes the several species of oviparous quadrupeds, if not those of the serpentine kind. A crocodile is, without doubt, the creature the Prophet means: and the comparison seems to point out the power of Egyptian kings of antiquity: they were mighty by sea as well as by land.[c]

6—10. (6) water . . blood, indicating the abundance of the slain. land . . swimmest, or the land of thy swimming.[a] The land watered by the Nile. (7) put thee out, as a candle is put out. Pharaoh is figured here as a star. cover, *etc.*, fig. of the downfall of other tributary nations at the same time as Egypt.[b]

a Carrying on the figure of the crocodile.

b Comp. Is. xiii. 10, xiv. 12; Joel

(8) set darkness, so that everything shall look dark and dismal.[c] (9) vex, *etc.*, by the story wh. the exiles shall carry of Egypt's utter desolation. (10) amazed at thee, ch. xxvi. 16, xxvii. 35, xxx. 9. brandish, or flourish.

Moral degradation of Egypt.—Travellers describe the most execrable vices as common, and represent the moral character of the people as corrupted to the core. As a token of the desolation of the country, mud-walled cottages are now the only habitations where the ruins of temples and palaces abound. Egypt is surrounded by the dominions of the Turks and of the Arabs; and the prophecy is literally true which marked it in the midst of desolation: "They shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted." The systematic oppression, extortion, and plunder, which have so long prevailed, and the price paid for his authority and power by every Turkish pacha, have rendered the country "desolate of that whereof it was full," and still show, both how "it has been wasted by the hands of strangers," and how "it has been sold into the hand of the wicked."[d]

11—16. (11) sword, emblem of the destructive power. (12) pomp, the splendid temples, palaces, etc., for which Egypt was famous. (13) destroy . . beasts, *comp.* ch. xxix. 11.[a] "Henceforth Pharaoh was no longer to flood other peoples with his overwhelming forces." (14) deep, better, *sink;* or subside. like oil, *i.e.* slowly; with no full current.[b] (15) then . . Lord, *i.e.* this shall be the gracious issue of My judgments. (16) lamentation, *v.* 2.

Unhappiness of ambition.—Look at the tender climbing plant of summer: it takes hold of some object, and creeps along upward till its tendrils shoot high and beautifully into the air; but the prop is taken away, and there it stands, reaching out its fingers for something to fasten upon: full of life and vigour still, but sinking because its support is taken away, and falling like a worthless weed to the ground. Such, even at the very moment of its greatest vigour, is often the state of those who seek worldly greatness. Look at all history: when were its great men so wretched, as when they had attained the highest point of exaltation! "He has gained everything," said a companion of Napoleon, when he was in the zenith of prosperity, "and yet he is unhappy."[c]

17—21. (17) the month, prob. the twelfth month.[a] (18) wail, *comp. v.* 2, 16. cast . . down, *i.e.* foretell its destruction. nether parts . . pit, fig. for utter and hopeless destruction.[b] (19) pass, or surpass. Other nations have perished, so shalt thou.[c] (20) delivered . . sword, better, the sword is put forth. draw her, like carcases to the grave. (21) the strong, *etc.:* this *v.* represents the great tyrants in Sheol coming to meet and welcome the king of Egypt and his auxiliaries.[d]

End of ambition.—Take the four greatest rulers, perhaps, that ever sat upon a throne. Alexander, when he had so completely subdued the nations that he wept because there were no more to conquer, at last set fire to a city, and died in a scene of debauch. Hannibal, who filled three bushels with the gold rings taken from the slaughtered knights, died at last by poison administered by his own hand, unwept and unknown, in a foreign land. Cæsar,

ii. 10, iii. 4; Am. viii. 9; Rev. vi. 12—14.

c So brilliant is the shining of the stars in the East that a great horror of darkness is represented by their being covered.

"Mean dependence, bright ambition's bane."—*Hayley.*

"Strong minds by chaste ambition nurst."—*Ibid.*

d *Keith.*

a "The picture is ideally true, not to be interpreted by the letter; the political ascendency of Egypt was to cease with the Chaldæan conquest."—*Fairbairn.*

b "No longer shall they descend violently, as the overflowing Nile, on other countries, but shall be still and sluggish in political action."—*Fausset.*

Some regard the oil as typical of the spirit of Divine grace; but that seems inappropriate here.

c *Lewis.*

a *v.* 1. The LXX. say the *first* month.

b Eze. xxxi. 14; Is. xiv. 15.

c "What reason hast thou now to prefer thyself before others? Since thou shalt undergo the same fate with the worst of them."—*Lowth.*

d Is. xiv. 9.

having conquered eight hundred cities, and dyed his garments with the blood of one million of his foes, was stabbed by his best friends in the very place which had been the scene of his greatest triumph. Napoleon, after being the scourge of Europe, and the desolator of his country, died in banishment, conquered and a captive.[e]

22—25. (22) **Asshur**, *i.e.* the king of Assyria. **his graves**, poss. alluding to Egypt, as sharing Asshur's fate. (23) **sides .. pit**,[a] the fig. is taken from the caves, or rock-sepulchres, where the dead are laid on shelves cut in the sides. **terror**, or dismaying. (24) **Elam**,[b] in Persia; an auxiliary of Assyria, conquered by Nebuchadnezzar.[c] **borne their shame**, "the just retribution of their lawless pride." (25) **bed**, a final bed, or a grave.

Assyrian graves.—Our idea of graves is entirely inconsistent with their being set in the sides of a pit. But the passage before us has reference to scenes in ancient Assyria, and is to be interpreted by the manners and customs prevalent in the Prophet's time. A traveller thus describes an Assyrian sepulchre which he explored: "Picture to yourself a small room, square in shape, and with a flat vault. On either side, recesses or niches (resembling a small oven) are cut into the wall, evidently to hold the body. These niches, being only about four feet long, may be thought too small to receive a man; but I imagine that the corpse was crammed into a sarcophagus similar to those discovered at Nimroud, which the recesses are well calculated to contain." It has been well observed that "the description of the Prophet is strictly applicable to such chambers as Mr. Ross discovered in the ancient rock; a pit, or cavern, in whose sides the individual tombs are set, where the company of the illustrious dead, that spread terror during their lives, meet round about in grim and silent assembly."

26—29. (26) **Meshech**, ch. xxvii. 13. **Tubal**, ch. xxvii. 13.[a] (27) **iniquities .. bones**, *comp.* expression "with their sins upon their heads." (28) **broken**, by a violent death. (29) **Edom**, ch. xxv. 12.

The burial of warriors (*v.* 27).—The ancients, in every part of the world, were accustomed to inter their warriors in complete armour. We are informed by Chardin that the Mingrelian soldier sleeps with his sword under his head, and his arms by his side; and he is buried in the same manner, his arms being placed in the same position. The allusion of Ezekiel to this ancient custom is extremely clear.

30—32. (30) **princes .. north**, *i.e.* of Syria. **Zidonians**, who shared the fate of Tyre. **their terror**, that wh. they inspired, not that wh. they felt.[a] (31) **comforted**, with the miserable comfort that others have to suffer even as he. (32) **my terror**, God making these nations marked examples of His vengeance on iniquity.

A cure for ambition.—A fellow-countryman of ours, ambitious to madness, had toiled for years, working early and late, denying himself every comfort, absorbed in the one fixed purpose of achieving intellectual superiority. His eye at length caught these words: "When all is gained, how little then is won! And yet to gain that little, how much is lost!" The words sunk into his heart. The whole truth flashed like lightning across

"Vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself."—*Shakespeare.*

e *Bowes.*

a Is. xiv. 15.

b Ge. xiv. 1; Is. xxii. 6.

c Je. xlix. 34–38.

"The Elamites were a fierce and warlike people. In the records of Assurbanipal we have a detailed account of five campaigns against Elam, and his final triumph over Elam seems to have been one of his proudest boasts."—*Spk. Com.*

"Oh that a breast so fair should be the seat of base ambition."—*Tighe.*

a "Northern nations; the Moschi and Tibareni, between the Black and Caspian Seas."—*Fausset.*

b *Paxton.*

a "When their might and power were terrible to all, and they were contriving ruin against others, in the midst of their enterprises, they were shorn of their power, and delivered over to shame and confusion."—*Rosenmüller.*

his soul. He now beheld the fame he had toiled for as absolutely worthless. "When all is gained, how little is won!" said he. "Yes, how little? Oh, what is it? It is nothing. Fame—oh, what is it? The breath of fools and devils. That is the object on which I have set my whole heart, and for which I have been labouring. 'When all is gained, how little then is won! And yet to gain that little, how much is lost!' Oh, how have I been labouring and suffering for it! I have given all for it, all of this world, and all of the next." Renouncing his schemes and possessions, he became a follower and preacher of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"The towering wing of eagle-plum'd ambition."—*Hannah More.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

1—6. (1, 2) **the sword**, God's judgment by a hostile army. **coasts**, or borders; put generally for "their country." **watchman**, to warn of the enemy's approach. Watchmen were placed in turrets on the city walls, or in outposts. (3) **blow**, *etc.*,[a] this was the appointed signal. (4) **blood . . head**, *i.e.* he must bear the responsibility himself, and cannot accuse the watchman. (5) **deliver his soul**, *i.e.* preserve his life, by adequate defence, or by timely flight. (6) **taken . . iniquity**, so comes under judgment. **blood . . require**, *i.e.* the watchman must answer to me for his unfaithfulness and its consequences.

The true watchman (*v.* 6).—I. The true watchman's vision of his work. He sees—1. It entails great responsibility on himself; 2. Involves the greatest results to his hearers; 3. Utters the emotions of God; 4. Proclaims both the hope and the method of man's improvement. II. The true watchman's vision of the conduct of others. He sees—1. The gross sins of many of them; 2. The hypocrisy of many more.[b]

a Is. lviii. 1; 1 Cor. xiv. 8.

v. 6. *W. J. E. Bennett*, 231.

"Ambition's like a circle on the water, which never ceases to enlarge itself, till by broad spreading it disperse to nought."—*Shakespeare.*

b *U. R. Thomas.*

7—11. (7) **thee a watchman**, ch iii. 17.[a] (8) **surely die**, *i.e.* by a violent death. "The qualification, if thou dost not repent, is supposed."[b] (9) **delivered thy soul**, from the responsibility of his doom. (10) **pine . . them**, ch. xxiv. 23. These are the words of persons despairing of God's mercy, and thence taking encouragement to go on in sin.[c] (11) **no pleasure**, *etc.*, 2 Sa. xiv. 14; Eze. xviii. 32.

An imperative command (*v.* 2).—We wish you to ask, and we will endeavour to answer, five questions. 1. What are we to turn from? 2. What are we to turn to? 3. How are we to turn? 4. When are we to turn? 5. Why are we to turn?—(*Jay.*)—*A solemn question.*—"Why will ye die?" The death to which this question relates is not temporal death, which is unavoidable; it is death eternal. 1. Do you think that it is imaginary? 2. Do you think that it is a trivial evil? 3. Do you think that it is uncertain in its occurrence? 4. Do you think that it is imposed upon you by an unalterable decree? 5. Do you think that the Divinely-appointed method of escape from it is not satisfactory? 6. Do you think that on a view of the whole circumstances it is to be preferred![d]—*The salvation of sinners desired by God.*—"As I live," etc. I. The state of mankind as sinners. 1. A state of moral evil; 2. A state of imminent danger. II. Their duty and privilege as sincere penitents. 1. Their duty—to turn; 2. Their privilege—to be saved; 3. The attainment of this

a "Think not that bec. the walls and gates of Jerus. may be destroyed, thy duty as a watchman to the house of Israel will cease. No; from that very time it will have new obligations, and thou wilt have new admonitions, consolations, and promises to give. The fall of Jerusalem will be a renewal of thy commission."—*Wordsworth.*

b *Fausset.*

c Je. ii. 25.

vv. 7–9. *J. P. Hewlett*, 15.

d *G. Brooks.*

v. 8. *S. Davies*, iii. 316.

v. 9. *Dr. F. S. Hook*, 211.

v. 11. *R. Allestree*, 57; *A. Farindon*, i. 497; *R. Baxter*, vii.; *T. Gregory*, 51; *Dr. R. Lucas*, i. 302; *J. Foord*, 65; *T. St. John*, i. 135; *D. Cooper*, ii. 164; *C. F. Fenwick*, i.; *B. W. Mathias*, 227; *R. W. Dibdin*, 204.

e *Alpha* in 400 Sks.

f *J. Fuller.*

g *Rev. David Thomas, D.D.*

privilege is as certain as it is desirable. Apply :—"Why will ye die?"[e]—*The sinner his own destroyer.*—That God has no pleasure in the eternal death of the sinner is manifest—1. From what God has said; 2. From what God has done. Learn :—(1) God does not compel sinners to go down to ruin; (2) Every sinner must turn from his evil ways, or he will finally perish; (3) If impenitent, sinners are eternally ruined; they are self-ruined.[f]

Why men are not saved.—"Well, then," said a sceptic to me, on one occasion, "why is the world not saved?" "My friend," said I, "you misconceive the power required to convert souls." There was a little boy in the room, and I illustrated my meaning by saying, "Suppose I will that that little boy leave the room. There are two ways in which I could give effect to that will. I could take him in my arms, and by superior muscular force remove him; or I could take him on my knee, speak lovingly and persuasively to him, in order to induce him to leave the room himself. If I adopted the former, I should merely have removed his body: his volition would be against me, and he would feel I had done him violence; if I succeeded in the latter, I should have influenced his mind, and he himself would use his own little limbs, and with a happy smile depart."[g]

a Le. vi. 5.

v. 15. *Dr. J. Hunt*, iii. 241.

"God's seed will come to God's harvest."—*Rutherford.*

"The Gaul insatiate, burning with the pangs of wild ambition thwarted."—*Richardson.*

b *Spencer.*

12—16. (12) righteousness, *etc.*, ch. xviii. 24, 26, 27. (13) trust to, or lean upon, think the good will outweigh his evil. (14) lawful and right, or judgment and justice. (15) restore the pledge, ch. xviii. 7. give .. robbed,[a] make the full restitution which is the sign of a true penitence. walk .. life, ch. xx. 11. (16) mentioned, ch. xviii. 22.

Works concomitant with faith.—The eye alone seeth in the body, yet the eye which seeth is not alone; the forefinger alone pointeth, yet that finger is not alone on the hand: the hammer alone striketh on the bell, yet the hammer that striketh is not alone in the clock; the heat alone in the fire burneth, yet that heat is not alone without the light; the helm alone guideth the ship, yet the helm is not without the tackling. Thus, though faith alone doth justify, yet that faith which justifieth is not alone, but joined with charity and good works. Though good works are not the cause why God crowneth us, yet we must take them in our way to heaven, or we shall never come there.[b]

v. 20. *W. Harrison, Blooms. Lec.* viii. 151.

[z] We may talk of the best means of doing good, but, after all, the greatest difficulty lies in doing it in a proper spirit; 'speaking the truth in love,' 'in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves,' with 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ.' I have known anxious

17—20. (17) not equal, or fair. (18, 19) when, *etc.*, comp. *vv.* 13—16. (20) way .. equal, ch. xviii. 25.

Good works no Saviour.—The time is coming when all things shall appear as they are, according to the spiritual measurement of things. The time is coming when you and I shall have served our term here, and shall have passed through sickness and death, and shall stand before God. You will go up, many of you, with your fancied excellences and your complaisant characters in your hand, to stand before God, only to see that you never knew Him, and to hear Him say, "I never knew you." Strangers, aliens, and enemies you are by evil works. Although you have sat much under the Gospel, and have all your life long been surrounded with beneficent influences, they have never brought your soul into a living communion with the spirit or the love of God. Immortality can only come by that, and you have lost your portion. And as you depart, glancing, and seeing the glory

that you leave behind, then, methinks, some feeble voices shall be lifted up, and shall be heard. Some poor child of sin and sorrow, betrayed by her best affections, was carried down, till all that was within her said. "I am lost if God does not save me!" when, shot from the bosom of God's love there came a ray of light, and she looked and saw her Saviour. And ever since she has followed Him, and she will enter the kingdom of heaven. And in that moment, when she becomes the companion of God's angels, you, that never sinned as she did, nor listened to the voice of your passions; you that have turned your face from God and heaven, will go down, down, down, for ever and for ever, and will perish! And then you will know that it is possible even for a publican and a harlot to enter the kingdom of God, and you to be cast out.[a]

21—24. (21) **one escaped**, prob. more than one. From the date it appears that the fugitives were more than a year making their way to Chaldæa. **city is smitten**, *comp.* 2 Ki. xxv. 4. (22) **hand**, *etc.*, the expression prob. indicates a state of trance. **opened**, to speak to the people, who were stricken dumb with the sad tidings. (23, 24) **wastes**, so recently desolated by the conqueror. **one**, a single person; yet he found God faithful to His promise; much more shall *we*, who are many.

The best news.—Said a teacher to his boys one day, "Tell me, now, what was the best news that you ever heard." One boy said it was that his father, who had been long away at sea, was coming home. Another, that he was to have a new Bible, all his own. One, who had lived almost all his life in the country, said the news that pleased him best was that he was going to London. Another, brought up in London, had been most glad to hear that he was going into the country. One little boy, the last of all, said, "I think the best news I ever heard, teacher, was that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

25—29. (25) **eat . . blood**, a practice connected with idolatry.[a] (26) **stand . . sword**, *i.e.* rely on your own power. Might is your right. (27) **they . . wastes**, prob. referring to Gedaliah's party, wh. hoped to settle in Jerusalem, and re-establish the kingdom. (28) **most desolate**, by the destruction of the remaining remnant. **pomp**, *etc.*, ch. xxiv. 21. (29) **then**, *i.e.* when the judgments are complete.

Fear of judgment.—Jerome used to say that it seemed to him as if the trumpet of the last day was always sounding in his ear, saying: "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." The generality, however, think but little of this awful and important period. A Christian king of Hungary being very sad and pensive, his brother, who was a gay courtier, was desirous of knowing the cause of his sadness. "O brother!" said the king, "I have been a great sinner against God, and know not how to die, or how to appear before Him in judgment." His brother, making a jest of it, said: "These are but melancholy thoughts." The king made no reply; but it was the custom of the country that if the executioner was to sound a trumpet before any man's door, he was presently led to execution. The king, in the dead hour of the night, sent the executioner to sound the trumpet before his brother's door, who, hearing it, and seeing the message of death,

sinners drop the subject of religion in consequence of a preacher addressing them in an angry tone."—*Nettleton.*

"Ambition climbing with a giant's pride."—*Sewel.*

a Beecher.

"There were different tribes in the wilderness, but the manna was for all. When the clouds pour out the rain they disregard all the divisions of the land, and the refreshing shower falls alike upon cottage, farm, garden, and lordly hall."—*Rev. Thomas Jones.*

"I yielded up my fond believing heart for the charms of treacherous ambition."—*Smollet.*

a See Ge. ix. 4; Le. iii. 17, vii. 26, xvii. 10—14; De. xii. 16; Ac. xv. 29.

"Perhaps the phrase should be trans. 'near the blood,' in allusion to the idolatrous rite of pouring the blood of the slain beast into a vessel or pit, and then eating part of the sacrifice just by it."—*Spencer.*

"Ambition's dark and subtle art too oft love's rites have misapplied"—*Phillips.*

sprang into the king's presence, beseeching to know in what he had offended. "Alas! brother," said the king, "you have never offended me." And is the sign of execution so dreadful, and shall not I, who have greatly offended, fear to be brought before the judgment-seat of Christ?[b]

30—33. (30) against thee, bec. of thy sombre prophecies. in the doors, where the people often sit.[a] *Gadsby* says, "I saw many persons squatted in groups round their doors, smoking with their long pipes, and talking." (31) as thy people, as if they meant to listen and obey, but with no real intention of *doing* what you enjoin. (32) lovely song, of wh. they like the sound, not the words.[b] (33) this . . pass, esp. what Ezekiel had been saying about the remnant left amid the desolations of Jerusalem.

An old picture of modern life (*vv.* 30—32).—Some people have true prophets, some true prophets have false people. Let us notice their conduct. I. They conversed much concerning their prophet. 1. This practice is a very common one; 2. It is frequently very injurious. II. They were interested in the ministry of their prophet: such interest is no proof of piety, such ministry meets the desire for excitement, for knowledge, for happiness. III. They were spiritually unreformed by the ministry of their prophet. 1. Divine truth is preached that it may be practised; 2. It will never be practised if the heart go after covetousness. IV. They were destined to discover, when too late, their terrible mistake in relation to the ministry of their prophet. 1. In the reproaches of a guilty conscience; 2. In the felicities of experimental religion; 3. Or, in the mysterious horrors of retribution.[c] — *On hearing sermons.* — I. The Gospel may be heard with pleasure but without profit. 1. When the mind only is gratified; 2. When the affections are merely excited. II. The converse is true. 1. Does the Word make you watchful? 2. Prayerful? 3. Lead you to obedience? III. It is desirable that the Gospel should be heard both with pleasure and profit. 1. The pleasure should arise from the message, not from the rhetoric: 2. From our felt sense of participation in the benefits of which the message speaks; 3. From our determination to obey the message.[d]— *Sentimentalism* (*v.* 32).—I. The sentimentalist, as well as the Christian, attends on the preaching of the Gospel. 1. He is a frequent attender, a sermon-hunter: 2. He delights to attend on the preaching of the Gospel, admires the stars of the pulpit, talks much of his favourite preacher; 3. He has his sensibilities stirred by the preaching of the Gospel: he is an interested, appreciative, admiring, excited hearer, feels intellectual gratification, æsthetic pleasure, emotional glow, etc.; 4. Unlike the Christian he is not permanently influenced by the preaching of the Gospel: convinced but not converted, his religion a matter of taste or fancy, or emotion, he wants a living faith.[e]

The covetous man's prayers.—About eight years since (says a correspondent of the *New York Evangelist* of 1833), while obtaining subscriptions for a benevolent purpose, I called upon a gentleman in one of our largest cities, who generously contributed to the object. Before leaving, I said to him, "How much, think you, will such an individual subscribe?" "I don't know," said he: "but could you hear that man pray, you would think he would give you all he is worth." I called upon him, but to my

b Biblical Treasury.

a "The ruling race take great pride in their fine and lofty gates, whose double doors stand open all day long, revealing the refreshing shade within of the peacock tree, etc. . . . On the carved benches, each side of the gate, lounge the gaily-clad retainers of the great man. And he himself often takes his seat there."—*Van Lennep.*

b "They praise thy eloquence, but care not for the subject of it as a real and personal thing; just as many do in the modern Church."—*S. Jerome.*

v. 21. *Bp. Fleetwood*, 59; *J. Douglas*, 145; *A. B. Evans*, 202; *J. W. Warter*, ii. 109; *J. H. B. Mountain*, 192.

v. 32. *Dr. J. Donne*, v. 378; *Dr. Chalmers*, vii. 152; *Is. Williams*, 288.

c Dr. Thomas.

d Stems and Twigs.

e G. Brooks.

"'Gone! gone!' says the bereaved admirer: 'she was indeed like a sweet voice to my ear.' 'I hear not the sweet song.' 'Where is my music?' 'The

surprise he would not contribute. As I was about to take my leave of him, I said to him, "As I came to your house, I asked an individual what he thought you would probably give. 'I don't know,' said he; 'but could you hear that man pray, you would think he would give you all he is worth.'" The man's head dropped, tears gushed from his eyes, he took out his pocket-book, and gave me seventy-five dollars. He could not withstand this argument; his heart relented, and his purse opened.

song of the night! the song of the night! has left me.'"—*Roberts.*

"Ambition, sky-aspiring, led him on."—*Smart.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

1—6. (1, 2) **shepherds**, or unfaithful rulers and princes.[a] **feed themselves**,[b] *comp.* 2 Cor. xii. 14: Ph. ii. 21. (3) **fat**, or perhaps the milk. These figures imply the levying of exorbitant taxes. **kill**, *etc.*, so as to grasp the property of the dead. (4) **diseased**, or convalescent: those, weak while recovering from disease. **broken**, as by wolves. **driven away**, or straying; seduced into error. **sought . . lost**, *contrast* Lu. xv. 4. **force**, *etc.*, comp. Ex. i. 13, 14.[c] (5) **meat**, or a prey; bec. not defended. Ref. prob. is to the people being left exposed to temptations to idolatry. (6) **mountains**, *etc.*, the special scenes of idol worship.

The Divine Shepherd (chapter xxxiv.).—I. That all rulers have great responsibilities, they are shepherds. II. The failure of rulers is ever a great misfortune to subjects. III. All misrule will only come to an end in the proportion that God Himself reigns over a people. 1. What is the method by which God will become consciously the ruler of man? 2. What will be the results of such rule?[d]

Sheep in the East.—When travelling in wilderness parts of the world, cattle are, on various accounts, apt to wander or to be scattered, and require attentive shepherds to watch their motions. Should the grass near the encampment of the traveller not suit their taste, or be scarce, they will gradually move to a greater and greater distance, till bushes or clumps of trees are between them and the wagons; then, perhaps, having the scent of water, or that of better grass, they will move off at great speed. The distant roar of a lion also will so alarm them that they will start off like furious or frantic animals. I remember halting for a night about a hundred miles beyond Lattakoo. Knowing that lions were numerous in that part, all the oxen were made fast by ropes to the wagons. During the night lions had roared within hearing of the oxen, when all, no doubt, had through terror endeavoured to break loose from their fastenings, but only three had succeeded, which having fled, were pursued by two lions, and one of them caught, and almost entirely devoured by those two voracious animals. After they had fairly killed the one, they pursued the other two for upwards of two miles, when they gave up the chase, and returned to feast on the one they had secured. All this we knew from the foot-marks they had left on the ground. In the morning the Hottentots were sent in search of the other two, which they found feeding several miles off. The Jewish shepherds were condemned for not searching for the scattered sheep. When men are fatigued by travelling, they become lazy and indolent, and feel indisposed to set off in search of strayed oxen many miles distant; yet I never noticed our

a Je. xxiii. 1.

"All those who are invested with the duties, whether civil or ecclesiastical, of ruling, tending, and feeding the flock of My people."—*Wordsworth.*

b "It was characteristic of the last kings of Judah that while the distress and misery of the people daily increased, the kings exacted more and more of their subjects, and lavished more and more on personal luxury and show."—*Spk. Com.*

c Le. xxv. 43, 46.

"A magistrate should look upon himself as sustaining the office of a shepherd, that makes it his chief business to take care of his flock; not as if he were going to a feast to fill himself and satiate his appetite, or to a market to make what gain he can to himself."—*Plato.*

d *U. R. Thomas.*

v. 2. *St. Augustine, Op.* vii. 225.

v. 6. *Abp. Sumner* 152.

Hottentots unwilling to go in search of strayed oxen, however fatigued they might be, and rarely did they return without finding them, though, in some instances, they had to trace their footmarks for upwards of twenty miles.[e]

7—10. (7, 8) **became meat**, *v.* 5. **search for**, so as to be sure that none were missing, and so as quickly to bring back the wandering. (9, 10) **require my flock**, or demand an account of My flock from them, and punish them if there are any missing.[a] **cease**, or remove fr. the office in wh. they have proved unfaithful.

An old woman in Wiltshire.—A minister in Wiltshire, walking near a brook, observed a poor woman washing wool in the stream; which is done by placing it in a sieve, and dipping it in the water repeatedly, until it is white and clean. He engaged in conversation with her, and, from some expressions of regret and gratitude which she uttered, was induced to ask her if she knew him. "O yes, sir," she replied, "and hope I shall have reason to bless God for you to all eternity. I heard you preach at W——, some years back; and hope your sermon was the means of doing me great good." "Indeed, I rejoice to hear it: pray, what was the subject?" "Ah, sir, I can't recollect that; mine is such a bad head." "How then can it have done you good, if you don't even remember it?" "Sir, my poor mind is like this sieve; the sieve doesn't hold the water, but it runs through and cleanses the wool: my memory does not keep the words, but, blessed be God, He made them touch the heart: and now I don't love sin; I go whenever I can to hear of Jesus Christ; and I beg of Him every day to wash me in His own blood, which cleanses from all sin." This practical way of remembering good things is the best of all remembrance. Our stores of religious information cannot render us service unless they are reduced to practice. Reader, do you complain of want of memory, as to what you read of the Bible? Let this anecdote give you a hint. Keep the sieve wet; let the water constantly be running through. The effect, by God's blessing, will be seen in your conduct.[b]

11—14. (11) **search . . out**, God Himself will do what the shepherds neglected. He is the proper Owner of the flock, they were only under-shepherds. The repetition of the pronoun *I* makes it emphatic. (12) **cloudy . . day**,[a] of national calamity and humiliation. (13) **gather them**, this would be the first sign of returning favour.[b] The full reference points to the ingathering from all nations to the Church of Christ. (14) **good pasture**, Ps. xxiii. 2. **high mountains**, ch. vi. 2, 3.[c] **good fold**, secure and pleasant.

The lost sheep.—Here's a farmer owns a hundred sheep. Well, at night he counts 'em; and he makes one short. He goes over them again: perhaps he's reckoned wrong. No: it's only ninety-nine again. He goes in to his wife, who is sitting by the kitchen fire waiting till he comes to supper. "Why, lass, there's one gone. Poor thing! he must have got over the wall." (Ah! the devil's always ready to help a poor sheep of Christ over the wall.) He starts in search of him. By-and-by he sees the foot-marks. Ah, yonder he is! But now he has to mind where he treads: he has to make a spring now and then over some boggy place: and the land is all sopping wet. But he sees the track of the wanderer; and now he hears "Ba-a!" and the great soft eyes of

e Campbell.

a Comp. Je. lii. 9—11.

"Can earth afford such genuine state, pre-eminence so free, as when array'd in Christ's authority, he from the pulpit lifts his awful hand; conjures, implores, and labours all he can for re-subjecting to Divine command the stubborn spirit of rebellious man?"—*Wordsworth.*

"Just as a dark lantern is of no use to any but to him who carries it dark everywhere, behind and on either side, but held by its possessor, it casts before him a stream of informing light."—*Bp. of Oxford.*

b R. T. S.

a "Of sin, error, and unbelief."—*S. Augustine.*

b Is. lxv. 9, 10; Je. xxiii. 3; Eze. xxviii. 25, xxxvi. 24, xxxvii. 21, 22.

c "The pastures of the mountains of Israel, on which the sheep feed, and the rivers of which they drink, may be interpreted to mean the spiritual pastures and streams of Holy Scripture, which have flowed into all lands."—*S. Augustine.*

v. 12. *J. Downes*, ii. 279.

the creature stare up at him from a quagmire, as if to say, "O master, help me out!" He takes him up, and puts him over his shoulders; and the black mud drips down his jacket: but he doesn't mind that. At last he comes to the brook that skirts his orchard; and then he washes all the filth away, and the poor thing trots into the fold with such a happy bleat, as if to say, "Thank you, sir!" Now, that's how Jesus fetches back His wanderer; only He doesn't put him across His shoulders. He puts him into His bosom; and then He takes and washes him in the fountain filled with His own precious blood. That's what He did for me eight years ago. And that's what He is ready to do for you. Hallelujah![d]

He preaches Christ best, who lifts Him up most.

d Richd. Weaver.

15—19. (15) lie down, the sign of their being satisfied and secure, Ps. xxiii. 2. (16) destroy the fat, *i.e.* those who have made themselves fat at the expense of the sheep. judgment, or discretion; treating each one according to his deserts: see *v.* 17. (17) between . . cattle, *i.e.* bet. weak and strong cattle.[a] (18) tread down, *etc.*, spoiling, so that others cannot use, what they do not want themselves.[b] (19) my flock, wh. for My sake ought to be so carefully tended.

A poor but good preacher.—

A good man ther was of religioun,
That was a poure persone of a toun:
But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche.
His parishens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversite ful patient:
And swiche he was ypreved often sithes.
Ful loth wer him to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven out of doute,
Unto his poure parishens aboute,
Of his offring, and eke of his substance.
He coude in litel thing have suffisance.
Wide was his parish, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne left nought for no rain ne thonder,
In sickenesse and in mischief to visite
The ferrest in his parish, moche and lite,
Upon his fete, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,
That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.
Out of the Gospel he the wordes caught,
And this figure he added yet therto,
That if gold ruste, what shuld iren do!
For if a preest be foule, on whom we trust,
No wonder is a lewed man to rust:
Wel ought a preest ensample for to yeve,
By his clenenesse, how his shepe shulde live.
He sette not his benefice to hire,
And lette his shepe acombred in the mire,
And ran unto London, unto Seint Poules,
To seken him a chantere for soules,
Or with a brotherhede to be withold:
But dwelt at home, and kepte wel his fold,
So that the wolfe ne made it not miscarie.[c]

a Lit. "Between the small cattle and the cattle of rams and he-goats." A fig. for "between the poor and the rich."

b "The flock was obliged to eat what they had trodden into the dirt, and drink that which they had muddied. . . The great men were so vexatious to the poor that what little coarse food they had was submitted to them." — *Mat. Henry.*

v. 17. *St. Augustine, Op.* vii.; *B. Beddome,* v. 67.

v. 19. *Dr. J. Donne,* iv. 407.

"The language of reason, unaccompanied by kindness, will often fail of making an impression; it has no effect upon the understanding, because it touches not the heart. The language of kindness, unassociated with reason, will frequently be unable to persuade; because, though it may gain upon the affections, it wants that which is necessary to convince the judgment. But let reason and kindness be united in a discourse, and seldom will even pride or prejudice find it easy to resist."—*Gisborne.*

c Chaucer.

20—23. (20) judge between, so as to relieve the sufferers and punish the oppressors. The *fat* stands for the rich and arrogant rulers; the *lean* for the humble poor of the people. (21) thrust, *etc.*, fig. taken from the rough ways of rams and he-goats.[a] (22) save, out of the hand of such self-seeking oppressors. (23) one shepherd, the full and final reference must be to Messiah.[b] servant David, a second and a greater David.[c]

Christ, the Good Shepherd.—One of my friends, travelling in Greece some years since, met three shepherds with their flocks. One had under his care about six hundred and fifty sheep, another about seven hundred, and the third about seven hundred and fifty, in all twenty-one hundred: these three flocks were put together. Each sheep had a separate name; it would not answer to any other name, nor even to its own, unless called by its own shepherd. Each shepherd knew all his sheep, and also their names. If he saw that one was going in a dangerous direction, he called it, and it retraced its steps. If the way was narrow or steep, he walked first, and the sheep followed. It was cold when my friend met the shepherds. Some of the lambs appeared very vigorous and playful, but others, on the contrary, appeared weak and delicate. The cold made them tremble, and they could scarcely walk. The shepherds were clothed in large cloaks, gathered in at the waist by a girdle. They took these little lambs, and put them in their bosoms. They took care not to stifle them, but to leave their heads uncovered, in order that they might breathe freely; but thus they kept them warm! It was pleasing to see these old shepherds, with their long grey beards, and their bosoms filled with the lambs. It is thus that Jesus did. "He shall gather the lambs with His arms," the Bible tells us, "and carry them in His bosom." Children have loved Jesus, and Jesus has not left them to perish. He takes care of them as well as of grown persons. "I love them that love Me," says He: "and they that seek Me early (or carefully) shall find Me." Amongst the twenty-one hundred sheep that my friend saw, he found some weak or fatigued. They could not walk much, especially in steep or miry places. Then the shepherds approached them, and, placing their crook beneath them, helped them to advance. They always treated them with the greatest tenderness. The Good Shepherd also does the same; He pities the weak, and assists them in their journey: He never abandons them; He makes them go out to find pasture.[d]

24—27. (24) their God, *i.e.* I will be in manifest and gracious relations with them as their God. a prince, or living representative and agent of God. God *manifest*. (25) covenant of peace, one that shall ensure peace for them. sleep . . woods, a sure sign of security. The peopling of a country results in driving the wild beasts from the woods and forests. (26) shower, periodical rains, on which the fruitfulness of the land depended.[a] (27) safe, ref. prob. is to the harvest of land and tree, wh. should be secured to the people, not stolen by maraunders.[b]

Showers of blessing (*v.* 26).—I. We are to observe that this communication is needed by the world. 1. The condition of the heathen world; 2. The slow progress of religion among men. II. That this communication is promised by God. 1. Its nature

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a Ps. xxii. 12, lxviii. 31; Da. viii. 3, 5.

b Is. xl. 11; Jno. x. 11.

c Is. lv. 3, 4; Je. xxx. 9; Ho. iii. 5.

Alexander the Great was much offended with those who refused the presents that he offered them, and once wrote to Phocion that he could no longer number him among his friends if he rejected the marks of his regard. So with Christ to His children. He is not pleased with us when we do not expect large things from Him, and accept the large things that He offers us. We honour Him by obeying His every word in faith, like the man at the pool of Bethesda, and gratefully accepting His choicest blessings.

d French S. S. Magazine.

a Mal. iii. 10.

b "The literal fulfilment is the primary one, though the spiritual also is designed. In correspondence with the settled reign of righteousness internally, all is to be prosperity externally, fertilising showers, and productive trees and lands."—*Fausset.*

is defined by His promise; 2. Its extent is also defined; 3. His purpose defines the result of this communication. III. It must be sought by the Church. 1. By removal from the world; 2. By the cultivation of union and love; 3. By the employment of zealous and vigorous exertions; 4. By the offering of fervent and importunate prayer.[c]

Oriental shepherds.—The Oriental shepherds, when unprovided with tents, erect huts or booths of loose stones, covered with reeds and boughs. Pococke found, in the neighbourhood of Acre, some open huts, made of boughs raised about three feet from the ground, inhabited by Arabs. In such booths many of the people of Israel were obliged to take shelter in the wilderness, from the want of a sufficient number of tents, the remembrance of which they were commanded to preserve by a solemn festival. But even these meaner and more inconvenient habitations are not always within the reach of an Arabian shepherd; he is often obliged to take refuge under the projecting rock, and to sleep in the open air. A grove or woodland occasionally furnishes a most agreeable retreat. The description which Chandler has left us of one of these stations, is so strikingly picturesque, that it must be given in his own words: "About two in the morning our whole attention was fixed by the barking of dogs, which, as we advanced, became exceedingly furious. Deceived by the light of the moon, we now fancied we could see a village, and were much mortified to find only a station of poor goatherds, without even a shed, and nothing for our horses to eat. They were lying, wrapped in their thick capotes or loose coats, by some glimmering embers, among the bushes in a dale, under a spreading tree by the fold. They received us hospitably, heaping on fresh fuel, and producing sour curds and coarse bread, which they toasted for us on the coals. We made a scanty meal, sitting on the ground, lighted by the fire and by the moon, after which sleep suddenly overpowered me. On waking, I found my two companions by my side, sharing in the comfortable cover of the janizary's cloak, which he had carefully spread over us. I was now much struck with the wild appearance of the spot. The tree was hung with rustic utensils; the she-goats in a pen sneezed, and bleated, and rustled to and fro; the shrubs by which our horses stood were leafless, and the earth bare; a black caldron, with milk, was simmering over the fire; and a figure, more than gaunt or savage, close by us, struggling on the ground with a kid, whose ears he had slit, and was endeavouring to cauterise with a red-hot iron." This description forms a striking comment on a passage in Ezekiel, in which God condescends to give this promise to His people: "I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods." No reasonable doubt can be entertained that they were often exposed in the same manner, while tending their flocks; and in great danger when their country, from the thinness of the population, or other causes, happened to be overrun with beasts of prey. They are accordingly cheered with the sure prospect of those ravenous animals being exterminated, and every woodland becoming a place of safety to the slumbering shepherd.[d]

28—31. (28) prey, *v.* 25. Obs. the reference to the perils

c J. Parsons.

The painter would never attain to eminence if he went to an exhibition and devoted himself to the study of some work of moderate worth, and said, "I will attempt to reach this, and there I will stop contented." No, he goes to the galleries of the great masters, and though his timid pencil may not dare to hope that he shall strike out thoughts so clearly and make life stand out upon the canvas as they have done, yet he seeks to drink in their inspiration, hoping that he may rise to some proud eminence in art by imitating them. The Christian's all-sufficient pattern is Christ.

"A wall of crystal is a safe defence against the force of fire, yet it is no obstruction to the beams and cherishing light of the sun. Such a crystal wall is Christ; He keeps off God's fiery indignation from us, but yet conveys to us the cherishing and reviving influences of His love." — *Bishop Hopkins.*

d Paxton.

a That is, to bring the people

glory, or "a name," instead of shame.

of idolatry. dwell safely, Je. xxiii. 6. (29) plant of renown, or "a planting for a name."[a] Comp. Is. lx. 21, lxi. 3. shame . . heathen, *i.e.* of sharing in the idolatries and moral evils of the heathen. Or it may refer to the reproaches of the heathen on account of the national humiliation. (30) I the Lord, *v.* 24. (31) my flock, Jno. x. 11. men, only men; so remember the contrast, "ye are *men*, I am *God*."

The plant of renown (*v.* 29).—1. Some plants are renowned for their rareness; 2. For their beauty; 3. For their fragrance; 4. For their healing virtue; 5. For their shelter from the sun; 6. For their excellent fruits. The person, work, blessings, and promises of the Lord Jesus considered under each of these representations.[b]

The plant of renown.—In the preceding and following verses Israel is compared to a flock of sheep, by observing which the propriety of the following illustration will be apparent:—"Looking to the east, flocks and herds were seen spreading through the undulating valleys. In one place we saw many of them gathered together under a shady tree, waiting till the excessive heat of noon should be abated. The sight of these flocks reclining beneath the shady trees suggested the true meaning of the passage, 'I will raise up for them a plant of renown.' This plant is some noble shady tree, where the flock may find rest and shelter; a wide-spreading covert, renowned for its coolness, under whose protecting branches they shall feed, and be 'no more consumed with hunger.' The great Redeemer is thus represented as giving to His flock, first shelter from burning wrath, and then peace to feed in plenty when they are delivered."

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

a De. ii. 5; Eze. xxv. 12—14.

1—6. (1, 2) Mount Seir, the country of Edom, inhabited by the descendants of Esau.[a] (3) stretch . . hand, the usual fig. of Divine judgments. (4) waste, as cities overrun by hostile armies. (5) perpetual hatred, hast kept up thy hatred from of old. iniquity . . end, or received its just doom, ch. xxi. 29. (6) prepare thee, change thee. There seems to be a play on the name, "I will change thee from Edom into Dam (blood). sith, or since. not hated, but rather taken delight in.

Idumæa.—There is a prediction which, being peculiarly remarkable as applicable to Idumæa, and bearing reference to a circumstance explanatory of the difficulty of access to any knowledge respecting it, is entitled, in the first instance, to notice: "None shall pass through it for ever and ever." Isaiah xxxiv. 10. "I will cut off from Mount Seir him that passeth out and him that returneth." Ezek. xxxv. 7. The ancient greatness of Idumæa must, in no small degree, have resulted from its commerce. Bordering with Arabia on the east, and Egypt on the south-west, and forming from north to south the most direct and most commodious channel of communication between Jerusalem and her dependencies on the Red Sea, as well as between Syria and India (through the continuous valleys of El Ghor and El Arabia, which terminated on the one extremity at the borders of Judæa, and on the other at Elath and Esiongaber on the Elanitic Gulf of the Red Sea), Idumæa may be said to have formed the

b *J. Laird.*

v. 29. *E. Erskine*, iii. 343; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 235.

"All the glory and beauty of Christ are manifested within, and there He delights to dwell; His visits there are frequent, His condescension amazing, His conversation sweet, His comforts refreshing; and the peace that He brings passeth all understanding."—*Thos. à Kempis.*

"Edom is the God-hating, God-opposing power, for Edom was ever distinguished for its bitter hatred against Israel, and so the ruin of Edom is the triumph of Israel in the power of God."—*Spk. Com.*

"It is only in their *national* character of foes to God's people that the Edomites are to be utterly destroyed."—*Faussel.*

There is a beautiful fable told of Amphion, the son of Jupiter, that he moved great

emporium of the commerce of the East. A Roman road passed directly through Idumæa, from Jerusalem to Akaba, and another from Akaba to Moab: and when these roads were made, at a time long posterior to the date of the predictions, the conception could not have been formed, or held credible by man, that the period would ever arrive when none would pass through it. Above seven hundred years after the date of the prophecy, Strabo relates that "many Romans and other foreigners" were found at Petra by his friend Athenodorus, the philosopher, who visited it. The prediction is yet more surprising, when viewed in conjunction with another, which implies that travellers would pass by Idumæa,—every one that goeth by shall be astonished. And the hadj routes (routes of the pilgrims) from Damascus and from Cairo to Mecca, the one on the east, and the other towards the south of Idumæa, along the whole of its extent, go by it, or touch partially on its borders, without passing through it. The truth of the prophecy (though hemmed in thus by apparent impossibilities and contradictions, and with extreme probability of its fallacy in every view that could have been visible to man) may yet be tried.[b]

7—11. (7) most desolate, *v.* 3. Heb. "desolation and desolation." passeth . . returneth, *i.e.* such shall be the peril of the country that no traveller will go through it. (8) mountains, Edom is characteristically a mountain district, ch. xxxii. 4, 5. (9) cities . . return, to habitation.[a] (10) two nations, Israel and Judah.[b] whereas, or although Jehovah dwelt there. (11) known . . them, *i.e.* among My people, whom I will surely defend against thee.

Idumæa.—The remark of Volney, who passed at a distance to the west of Idumæa, and who received his information from the Arabs in that quarter, "that it had not been visited by any traveller," will not be unobserved by the attentive reader. Soon after Burckhardt had entered, on the north-east, the territories of the Edomites, the boundary of which he distinctly marks, he says that "he was without protection in the midst of a desert, where no traveller had ever been before seen." It was then "that for the first time he had ever felt fear during his travels in the desert, and his route thither was the most dangerous he had ever travelled." Mr. Joliffe, who visited the northern shore of the Dead Sea, in alluding to the country south of its opposite extremity, describes it as "one of the wildest and most dangerous divisions of Arabia," and says that any research in that quarter was impracticable. Sir Frederick Henniker, in his *Notes* dated from Mount Sinai, on the south of Idumæa, unconsciously concentrates striking evidence in verification of the prediction, while he states a fact that would seem, at first sight, to militate against it. "Seetzen, on a vessel of paper pasted against the wall, notifies his having penetrated the country in a direct line between the Dead Sea and Mount Sinai" (through Idumæa), "a route never before accomplished. This was the more interesting to me, as I had previously determined to attempt the same, it being the shortest way to Jerusalem. The Cavalier Frediani, whom I met in Egypt, would have persuaded me that it was impracticable, and that he, having had the same intention himself, after having been detained in hope five weeks, was compelled to relinquish his design. While I was yet ruminating over

masses of stone, and raised the walls of Thebes, simply by making melody upon his lute. There is One greater than he, who has built the walls of His Church, and united together His people in bonds stronger than death, by the sweet, soft influences of words more gentle than the strains that flow from the lyre when tuned to sweetest notes.

b Keith.

a Comp. Is. xxxiv. 1—15.

"From Mount Hor, a part of Mount Peir, nothing is to be seen but ruggedness and desolation."—*Gadsby.*

b Ps. lxxxiii. 12.

"One thing wh. contributed to make Cæsar's soldiers invincible was their seeing him always take his share in danger, and never desire any exemption from labour or fatigue. We have a far higher incentive in the war for truth and goodness when we consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself."—*Spurgeon.*

Tertullian remarks, "If thou endurest wrong for Christ's sake, He is a revenger; if sorrow, He is a comforter; if sickness, He is a physician; if loss,

He is a restorer; if life, He is a reviver."
c Keith.

this scrap of paper, the superior paid me a morning visit; he also said it was impossible, but at length promised to search for guides. I had already endeavoured to persuade those who had accompanied me from Tor, but they also talked of dangers, and declined." Guides were found, who, after resisting for a while his entreaties and bribes, agreed to conduct him by the desired route; but, unable to overcome their fears, deceived him, and led him towards the Mediterranean coast, through the desert of Gaza.[c]

a Lowth.

b "When all the land of the living rejoices, and when the land of the saints and all other lands are converted to the service of God, then thou, O Mount Seir, and all Idumæa, that is, all ye powers of this world which delight in blood, shall be desolate, and shall know that I am the Lord."—*S. Jerome.*

God in Christ may as soon cease to be God, as cease to be gracious and good.

The profane swearer is compared to a fish who bites at the naked hook.

c Keith.

12—15. (12) blasphemies, evil things said against Israel are regarded as blasphemies against Israel's God. (13) against me, not against the nation merely. "You boast as if I could not assert My right in Judæa."[a] (14) rejoiceth, in restoration from their captivities and Divine judgments.[b] desolate, the Edomites never recovered their country. (15) all Idumæa, *i.e.* all the several tribes and divisions of it.

Idumæa.—Idumæa was situated to the south of Judæa and of Moab; it bordered on the east with Arabia Petræa, under which name it was included in the latter part of its history, and it extended southward to the eastern gulf of the Red Sea. A single extract from the *Travels* of Volney will be found to be equally illustrative of the prophecy and of the fact. "This country has not been visited by any traveller, but it well merits such an attention: for from the reports of the Arabs of Bakir, and the inhabitants of Gaza, who frequently go to Maan and Karak, on the road of the pilgrims, there are, to the south-east of the lake Asphaltites (Dead Sea) within three days' journey, upwards of thirty ruined towns absolutely deserted. Several of them have large edifices, with columns that may have belonged to the ancient temples, or at least to Greek churches. The Arabs sometimes make use of them to fold the cattle in, but in general avoid them on account of the enormous scorpions with which they swarm. We cannot be surprised at these traces of ancient population, when we recollect that this was the country of the Nabatheans, the most powerful of the Arabs, and of the Idumæans, who, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, were almost as numerous as the Jews, as appears from Josephus, who informs us, that on the first rumour of the march of Titus against Jerusalem, thirty thousand Idumæans instantly assembled, and threw themselves into that city for its defence.[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

a Virg. Georg. lib. iii. 1, 12.

"I want," said a young corporal one day to Hedley Vicars, "to have more of Jesus in this life." Christ crucified is not a mere fund in reserve—a kind of extreme unction to help men to die in peace:

1—4. (1) mountains, ch. vi. 2. (2) the enemy, Edom, as in the previous chapter. aha, a scornful and exulting expression. ancient high places, *comp.* "everlasting hills," Ge. xlix. 26. in possession, ch. xxxv. 10. (3) residue, *i.e.* those of the surrounding nations that had survived the fall of Jerusalem. infamy, or treated as infamous. (4) rivers, *lit.* bottoms, or wadies.

Idumæa.—A greater contrast cannot be imagined than the ancient and present state of Idumæa. It was a kingdom previous to Israel, having been governed first by dukes or princes, afterward by eight successive kings, and again by dukes, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. Its fertility and

early cultivation are implied, not only in the blessings of Esau, whose dwelling was to be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above, but also in the condition proposed by Moses to the Edomites, when he solicited a passage for the Israelites through their borders, "that they would not pass through the fields nor through the vineyards;" and also in the great wealth, especially in the multitudes of flocks and herds, recorded as possessed by an individual inhabitant of that country, at a period, in all probability, even more remote. The Idumæans were, without doubt, both an opulent and a powerful people. They often contended with the Israelites, and entered into a league with their other enemies against them. In the reign of David they were indeed subdued and greatly oppressed, and many of them even dispersed throughout the neighbouring countries, particularly Phœnicia and Egypt. But during the decline of the kingdom of Judah, and for many years previous to its extinction, they encroached upon the territories of the Jews, and extended their dominion over the south-western part of Judæa. Though no excellence whatever be now attached to its name, which exists only in past history, Idumæa, including perhaps Judæa, was then not without the praise of the first of Roman poets:

"Primus Idumeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas." [a]

And of Lucan: [b]

"Arbustis palmarum dives Idume." [c]

5—7. (5) fire . . jealousy, or fervent zeal for the honour of My name. Idumæa, ch. xxxv. 12, 15. despiteful minds, the bad feeling of Edom towards Israel is the thing specially noticed. (6) my fury, active indignation. borne the shame, ch. xxxiv. 29, xxxv. 12, 13. (7) lifted . . hand, the sign of taking an oath. bear their shame," wh. would be the disgrace of perpetual irremediable desolation.

Idumæa.—But Idumæa, as a kingdom, can lay claim to a higher renown than either the abundance of its flocks or the excellence of its palm trees. The celebrated city of Petra (so named by the Greeks, and so worthy of the name, on account both of its rocky vicinity and its numerous dwellings excavated from the rocks) was situated within the patrimonial territory of the Edomites. There is distinct and positive evidence that it was a city of Edom, and the metropolis of the Nabatheans, whom Strabo expressly identifies with the Idumæans, possessors of the same country, and subject to the same laws. "Petra," to use the words of Dr. Vincent, by whom the state of its ancient commerce was described before its ruins were discovered, "is the capital of Edom or Seir, the Idumæa or Arabia Petræa of the Greeks, the Nabatea, considered both by geographers, historians, and poets, as the source of all the precious commodities of the East." "The caravans, in all ages, from Minea, in the interior of Arabia, and from Gerrha, on the Gulf of Persia, from Hadramant on the ocean, and some even from Sabea or Yemen, appear to have pointed to Petra as a common centre; and from Petra the trade seems to have again branched out in every direction to Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, through Arsinoe, Gaza, Tyre, Jerusalem, Damascus, and a variety of subordinate routes that all terminated on the Mediterranean. There is every proof that is requisite to show that the Tyrians and Sidonians

it is the power which is daily to move the life, that they may live in holiness.

"Dungeons and thrones, which the same hours refill'd as heretofore; because ambition was self-will'd."—*Byron.*

"That spirit of his, inspiration lifts him from the earth."—*Shakespeare.*

b Phars. lib. iii.

c Keith.

a "The shame which they cast on you shall recoil on themselves."—*Wordsworth.*

If you look to Christ alone for salvation, you will look upon everything else as you ought; you will then put every doctrine and duty in Scripture in its right place.

If God was willing to give Christ for us, we may be quite sure He is willing to save us.

"Uncontroll'd ambition grasps at once, dominion absolute, and boundless wealth."—*Hannah More.*

"But rare on earth, is such sublime ambition found."—*Robert Montgomery.*

were the first merchants who introduced the produce of India to all the nations which encircled the Mediterranean; so is there the strongest evidence to prove that the Tyrians obtained all their commodities from Arabia. But if Arabia was the centre of this commerce, Petra was the point to which all the Arabian tended from the three sides of their vast peninsula."[b]

"Proud ambition is but a beggar."—*Daniel.*

[b] *Keith.*

8–11. (8) shoot forth, in the time of your restoration. they .. hand,[a] these restored days were really near, though no signs of them then appeared. God's promise is ever near, it does not really tarry. (9) for you, acting on your behalf. tilled and sown, after the time of captivity, during which the land shall keep her Sabbaths. (10) multiply men, contrast ch. xiv. 17. (11) better .. beginnings, *i.e.* give you more secure and lasting possession of the land, and prosperity in it.

[a] Will soon come under Zerubbabel.

"To see Jesus clearly with the eye of faith is to see the deep opening away from Egypt's shore—is to see the water gush sparkling from the desert rock—is to see the serpent gleaming on its pole over a dying camp—is to see the lifeboat coming when our bark reels among foaming breakers—is to see a pardon when the noose is on our neck and our foot is on the drop."—*Guthrie.*

Petra.—At a period subsequent to the commencement of the Christian era, there always reigned at Petra, according to Strabo, a king of the royal lineage, with whom a prince was associated in the government. It was a place of great strength in the time of the Romans. Pompey marched against it, but desisted from the attack, and Trajan afterwards besieged it. It was a metropolitan see, to which several bishoprics were attached in the time of the Greek emperors, and Idumæa was included in the third Palestine—*Palestina tertia sive salutaris.* But the ancient state of Idumæa cannot in the present day be so clearly ascertained from the records respecting it which can be gleaned from history, whether sacred or profane, as by the wonderful and imperishable remains of its capital city, and by "the traces of many towns and villages," which indisputably show that it must once have been thickly inhabited. It not only can admit of no dispute that the country and cities of Idumæa subsisted in a very different state from that absolute desolation in which, long prior to the period of its reality, it was represented in the prophetic vision; but there are prophecies regarding it that have yet a prospective view, and which refer to the time when "the children of Israel shall possess their possessions," or to "the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion." But, dangerous as it is to explore the land of Idumæa, and difficult to ascertain those existing facts and precise circumstances which form the strongest features of its desolate aspect (and that ought to be the subject of scientific as well as of religious inquiry), enough has been discovered to show that the sentence against it, though fulfilled by the agency of nature and of man, is precisely such as was first recorded in the annals of inspiration.[b]

You will be made willing to come to Christ when you are made weary of stopping away.

"Within his breast, as in a palace, lie, wakeful ambition, leagued with hasty pride."—*P. Fletcher.*

[b] *Keith.*

12–15. (12) upon you, *i.e.* upon the mountains of Israel, *v.* 1. (13) devourest up men, it was represented as a land exposed to famine and pestilence.[a] Comp. Nu. xiii. 32. (14) bereave, marg. *cause to fall*, an expression which may refer to falling into idolatry. (15) shame, or contemptuous speeches, *v.* 6. cause .. fall, as *v.* 14.[b]

[a] "The neighbouring people raised this ill character upon the land of Judæa, bec. of the severe judgments of the sword, famine, and pestilence, which had destroyed the greater part of its inhabitants."—*Lowth.*

Human works.—In the age succeeding the flood, they piled old Babel's tower, and said, "This shall last for ever." But God confounded their language: they finished it not. Old pharaoh and the Egyptian monarchs heaped up their Pyramids, and they said, "They shall stand for ever:" and so, indeed, they do stand, but the time is approaching when age shall devour even

[b] "The land of

these. The most stable things have been evanescent as shadows and the bubbles of an hour, speedily destroyed at God's bidding. Where is Nineveh? and where is Babylon? Where the cities of Persia? Where are the high places of Edom? Where are Moab and the princes of Ammon? Where are the temples of the heroes of Greece? Where are the millions that passed from the gates of Thebes? Where are the hosts of Xerxes? or where the vast armies of the Roman emperors? Have they not passed away? And though in their pride they said, "This monarchy is an everlasting one, this queen of the seven hills shall be called the eternal city," its pride is dimmed; and she who sat alone, and said, "I shall be no widow, but a queen for ever," she hath fallen; and in a little while she shall sink like a millstone in the flood, her name being a curse and a byword, and her site the habitation of dragons and of owls. Man calls his works eternal; God calls them fleeting: man conceives they are built of rock: God says, "Nay, sand; or, worse than that, they are air." Man says he erects them for eternity; God blows but for a moment, and where are they? Like baseless fabrics of a vision, they are passed and gone for ever.[c]

16—20. (16, 17) defiled it, making it *unclean*, and unfit to be regarded as God's holy land. (18) blood . . shed, esp. in idolatrous sacrifices, such as the worship of Moloch.[a] (19) according to, or with judgments proportioned and fitted to their wickedness. (20) profaned, *i.e.* dishonoured, disgraced.[b] Give a false and unworthy impression of Jehovah, the God of their land.

The messenger (*vv.* 16, 17).—I. This portion of Scripture, from ver. 16, presents an epitome of the Gospel; ver. 17, man sinning; ver. 18, suffering; ver. 21, an object of pity; ver. 24, his salvation resolved upon; ver. 26, 27, renewed and sanctified; ver. 28, restored. II. Who is commissioned to deliver God's message? not an angel, but a man. Observe—The kindness of God to man; the honour conferred by God on man; the wisdom of God.[c]

Profanity.—Some years ago, as a party were drinking in a public-house at a village near Dundee, two of them agreed to make a trial who should invent the newest and most profane oaths. While one of them was just opening his mouth to make the dreadful attempt, his jaws were suddenly arrested, so that he was unable to close his mouth, or speak a word. He was carried to the infirmary and died soon after. Let profane swearers tremble for their danger.[d]

21—24. (21) had pity, or a pitiful regard to;[a] ch. xx. 9. (22) not . . sakes, *i.e.* not on the ground of any good deservings of yours.[b] (23) sanctify my name, as a holy name, the name of One who cannot bear iniquity, and will "by no means clear the guilty." be sanctified, have My name cleared and honoured by My judgments. (24) take you,[c] after enduring the judgments and chastisements.

God's motive in salvation (*v.* 22).—I. Attend to the expression, for My name's sake. II. We are to understand that the motive which moved God to save man has regard to His own glory. III. In saving man for His holy name's sake, God exhibits the mercy, holiness, love, and other attributes of the Godhead.—*Man an object of Divine mercy.*—I. The doctrine that God is not

Israel will receive an outpouring of grace. Its idolatry will be removed from its high places. This was fulfilled at the return from Babylon, and how much more by the restoration in Christ!"—*Wordsworth.*

"Painted deceit, tyrannical ambition. Chase these far from you."—*Bowring.*

c Spurgeon.

a Eze. xvi. 36, 38, xxiii. 37.

b Is. lii. 5; Ro. ii. 24.

See *Dr. Guthrie, Gospel in Ezek.*

c Dr. Guthrie.

Profanity is said to be a tribute which the servants of the devil pay to their master in token of allegiance; as the tenants of a Scotch landholder pay Him a pepper-corn annually in token of submission.

d Whitecross.

a "And a thousand pities it was that that should be trampled on and abused. He looked with compassion on His own honour, wh. lay bleeding among the heathen, on that jewel which was trodden into the dirt."—*Mat. Henry.*

b De. ix. 6.

c Eze. xxxiv. 13,

xxxvii. 21, xxxix. 25.

d Dr. Guthrie.

a Nu. viii 5—22; Is. lxi. 6; Ile. x. 22.

"The rite thus prescribed by the Law and explained by the Prophets, gave occasion to the use of water at the admission of proselytes in later days, and so to its adoption by John in his baptism unto repentance."—*Spk.Com.*

b Is. xxxii. 15, xliv. 3; Joel ii. 28; Zec. xii. 10; Jno. vii. 38; Ac. ii. 17, 18.

v. 25. *R. Erskine*, viii. 280; *W. Romaine*, iv. 389; *C. Hardtley*, ii. 65.

v. 26. *G. Burder*, ii. 3; *W. Colvill*, 215; *T. Rogers*, ii. 250; *J. Cawood*, i. 396

v. 27. *Dr. H. Draper*, ii. 576.

d G. Brooks.

a Eze. xvi. 61.

b "The Prophet repeats this sentence on purpose to check all vain presumption in the Jews, and confidence of their own intrinsic worth or merit, a fault they have been very prone to in all ages."—*Lowth.*

c C. Simeon.

d Ibid.

v. 29. *H. B. Wilson*, 51.

v. 31. *R. Baxter*, xvii. 122; *R. Walker*, iv. 214.

v. 32. *Bp. Fleetwood*, 435.

a Is. li. 3.

b "What is the matter of God's

moved to save man by any merit or worth in him, is a truth of the highest importance to sinners. II. It is important for the saint also. III. While it keeps the saint humble, this doctrine will help to make the saint holy.[d]

25—28. (25) sprinkle, *etc.*, the sign of the recovered remnant being separated as priests unto the Lord.[a] filthiness, the moral evils always associated with idolatry. (26) new heart, the sign of changed feelings and views; ch. xi. 19; Je. xxxii. 39. stony heart, so long unimpressible by teachings and by judgments. heart of flesh, impressible and docile. (27) my spirit, as a spirit of obedience. The full gift of the Spirit was reserved for Messiah's times. (28) dwell, permanently and securely, and in the full covenant relations.

The new heart (*v.* 26).—I. The heart of man is by nature a heart of stone; it is impervious to religious impressions. Try it—1. By the beauties of nature; 2. By the wonders of Providence; 3. By the joys and sorrows of common life; 4. By the solemnities of the future world; 5. By the disclosures of the Bible; 6. By the attractions of the cross. II. It is the prerogative of God alone to change the heart. 1. This may be argued from the explicit testimony of Scripture; 2. From the nature and extent of human depravity; 3. From the figures which are employed by the sacred writers to represent the change; 4. From the frequent inefficiency of the most abundant and best-assorted means. III. The new heart is a heart of flesh. Try it—1. By the law of God; 2. By the Gospel; 3. By affliction; 4. By the sins of others; 5. By the glories of heaven.[c]

29—32. (29) save . . uncleannesses, *i.e.* from falling into them; from being contaminated with them. corn, type of both material and spiritual prosperity and increase. Material prosperity was part of the Divine pledge given in the Mosaic covenant. (30) reproach of famine, *see vv.* 13—15. (31) remember, with due penitence and humility.[a] lothe yourselves, ch. vi. 9. (32) your sakes,[b] *v.* 22.

The duty of self-loathing.—I. The duty enjoined. It implies—1. A calling of our evil ways to remembrance; 2. A loathing of ourselves on account of them. II. When it is to be performed. 1. Conversion qualifies us for it; 2. We need it as much after conversion as before. Infer—(1) How opposite to a Christian state is self-righteousness; (2) How dear must Christ be to every true penitent.[c]—*God's mercies not given for our merits* (*v.* 32).—I. God, in imparting His blessings to us, has not respect to any good in us; nothing in us meritorious to which He can have respect, nor would it consist with His honour; experience shows that God is not influenced by such motive. II. There is in us nothing which is not rather a ground for shame and confusion—the sins of our unregenerate state, the infirmities of our regenerate state. III. The importance of our being reminded of these things. 1. That we may be led to humility; 2. That we may be excited to thankfulness. Apply:—(1) Concede to God the liberty of dispensing His favours as He will; (2) Be thankful for the merits of Christ.[d]

33—38. (33) cleansed, this was the gracious issue of the chastisement of the captivity. The Jews have never since then relapsed into idolatry. (34, 35) garden of Eden, a fig. of rich

and perfect beauty.[a] (36) I the Lord, the signs of My power and grace will be so manifest, that in your blessing and prosperity My name will be glorified. (37) inquired of, *i.e.* sought in prayer.[b] It will be characteristic of the restored conditions that God will then be ready to answer prayer. flock, ch. xxxiv. 23. 31. (38) holy flock, the great flock of choice animals for sacrifice.

The necessity of prayer (*v.* 37).—I. The blessings for which we should inquire. 1. For ourselves; 2. For the Church of God; 3. For the world. II. The manner in which we should inquire for them. 1. In the method which He appoints; 2. With devout dispositions of mind; 3. In every situation of life: 4. With diligent perseverance unto death. III. The reasons why we should inquire of the Lord. 1. Prayer is a Divine ordinance; 2. Proves the dependence of the creature on the Creator; 3. And the connection between duty and interest.[c]

Yet!—"I will yet for this be inquired of" (Ezek. xxxvi. 37). Yet be inquired of—though His goodness has been so long abused by our sins! Yet—though He has promised to bless! For it is a characteristic of God's dealings with His people, that what He promises to do for them He will be, and is to be inquired of by them to do it for them. He connects means with ends, the prayers of His people with the blessings He confers upon them. After making "exceeding great and precious promises" to His Church, He adds, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock." There is a deep lesson to be learned from this "yet." It is a little word, but it implies much. It teaches us the connection of means and ends; so, if we would have a blessing, we must not be idle, but work; if we would receive, we must ask; if we would have an outpouring of the Spirit and a revival of God's work, we must pray. "Ask, and ye shall receive."[d]

promises must be the matter of our prayers. By asking for the mercy promised we must give glory to the donor, express a value for the gift, own our dependence, and put honour upon prayer which God has put honour upon."—*Mat. Henry.*

c Etc in 400 Sks.

He who causeth the soul to hunger and thirst after righteousness has also already provided an abundant supply by making His own Son unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30.

d Christian Intelligencer.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

1—4. (1) hand, *etc.*, ch. i. 3. in the spirit, meaning, in a vision. This was one mode of Divine communication with Ezekiel. valley, poss. the Chebar, poss. the valley by Jerusalem. (2) open valley, or wide plains.[a] very dry, "representing the Israelites dispersed abroad, destitute of life, national and spiritual." (3) thou knowest, the words imply, "it seems impossible to me."[b] (4) prophesy, in sense of "preach," "proclaim." O . . bones, *etc.*, comp. Jno. v. 28, 29.

Spiritual resurrection (*vv.* 1—10).—I. The condition of the world. 1. Spiritually dead, bones; 2. Hopelessly so, dry bones; 3. Universally so, valley full. II. The means for its recovery. 1. A Divine appointment, preaching; 2. The claim of attention; 3. The offer of salvation. III. The wonderful result. 1. The Gospel is accompanied by Divine power; 2. The Spirit is essential to complete success; 3. In the use of the means success is certain.—*Can these bones live?* (*v.* 3).—I. That all men are spiritually dead. 1. Destitute of the principle of spiritual life; 2. Insensible to the beauty and attractions of the spiritual world; 3. Incompetent to discharge the functions of holy beings; 4. Under the dominion of sinful propensities. II. That no created

a "The bones were lying, like bones of men slain in a battle, parched and bleached by the sun, in a low plain; and the Prophet was led round the higher ridge of the plain, as round the verge or margin of a volcanic crater, in order to survey them, lying below him in its dark bosom."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Faith leaves the question of possibility to rest with God, with whom nothing is

impossible."—*Fausset.*

e W. W. Whyte.

f G. Brooks.

power can communicate spiritual life to man. 1. Not the diffusion of knowledge: 2. Not external reformation: 3. Not civil government; 4. Not ecclesiastical rites: 5. Not moral suasion. III. That it is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to quicken the spiritually dead. 1. His influence is obtained in answer to prayer; 2. It operates through the instrumentality of the Word; 3. It produces faith in Christ: 4. The mode of His working is inscrutable. Apply:—(1) Prophesy unto the bones; (2) Prophesy unto the winds.[d]

a "This was fulfilled when, upon Cyrus's proclamation of liberty, those whose spirits God had stirred up began to think of making use of their liberty, and getting ready to be gone."—*Mat. Henry.*

b Dr. H. Bonar.

5—8. (5) cause breath, the sign of returning life. Ge. ii. 7. (6) sinews, *etc.*, the parts which corruption speedily and completely destroys. A fig. for the reviving and restoring of a nation. (7) noise, of movement; symbol of the gathering of Israelites from different parts. bone to his bone, each fitting into the proper place and relation. (8) no breath, so only as yet the forms of life.[a]

No breath, no life (*v.* 8).—I. Our creed may be sound and yet we may not be Christians. II. Our religion may be externally complete and yet we may not be Christians. III. Our good works may be numerous and praiseworthy, yet we may not be Christians. IV. Our life may be exemplary, and yet we may not be Christians. A life with no breath must be—1. A very imperfect life; 2. A very unhappy life; 3. A very unsuccessful life.[b]

v. 9. *E. Erskine*, i. 51; *H. Blunt*, iii. 98; *Dr. R. Balmer*, ii. 479; *H. McNeile*, 70.

A man without Christ is a world without a sun.

"Divine grace even in the heart of weak and sinful man is an invincible thing."—*Leighton.*

9, 10. (9) wind, or breath. symbol of the spirit of life. four winds, implying that Israel had been scattered to all quarters. slain, this expression suggests that the place of the vision was the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where those slain by the Chaldæans lay. (10) lived, showed signs of movement and expression. great army, to indicate the large numbers who will gather for the return and restoration.

The valley of dry bones (*v.* 10).—I. The desperate condition of unregenerate man. II. The agency by which God saves men from a state of unregeneracy. 1. By His Word: 2. By His Spirit. III. The effects which this deliverance produces. Apply:—(1) How important the preaching of the Gospel; (2) What comfort for downcast sinners.

a R. Cecil, M.A.
b Dr. Thomas.
v. 14. *J. Cennick*, 2.
God gave us to the Son, and the Son gave Himself for us.
"As leaves fall from the trees, so the graces of God decay and drop away, in the wicked, one after another, as if there was a consumption."—*Cawdray.*

11—14. (11) are, *i.e.* they represent the deplorable and forlorn condition of the house of Israel. cut off, hopelessly. We shall never be a nation again. our parts, or for our lot: as far as we are concerned. Indicating a condition of extreme despair. (12) open your graves, so that you need not despair of being beyond God's power. He can even raise the dead. (13) know, by a great and impressive proof and persuasion. (14) spoken it, in promises, and performed it in act.

Nature and grace (*vv.* 12—15).—This passage presents to us the grave of nature and the resurrection of grace.[a]—*Soul-resurrection* (*vv.* 13, 14).—I. This is a matter of individual responsibility. II. It is a good in itself. III. It is the grand end of all God's dealings with man. IV. It involves the highest agency of God. V. It is the only pledge of a glorious bodily resurrection.[b]

a Add, however, Levi, and part of Simeon, and the Jehovah-worshippers from the northern nation,

15—17. (15, 16) one stick. *comp.* Nu. xvii. 2. One *wood.* or *rod.* Judah, and Benjamin. wh. formed the kingdom of Judah.[a] (17) join them, as a symbol that in the restoration they should alike share, and from that time only one nation occupy the Holy Land.

Joining the sticks (*vv.* 15—17).—I. The sad condition of the people of Israel at the time the Prophet wrote. It was—1. Contrary to nature; 2. Displeasing to God; 3. Disastrous to themselves. II. The happy condition to which the people were about to be restored. 1. It is of great importance to the Church itself: 2. It is an immense advantage to the surrounding community; 3. It is well-pleasing and highly honouring to God. III. The agency by which this delightful change has to be effected. 1. He breathed into them the principle of spiritual life; 2. He sent them wise advisers and earnest intercessors; 3. He visited them with a sore trial; 4. He appointed them a common work; 5. He makes His residence in their midst.[b]

18, 19. (18) **show us**, this would seem to be unnecessary, but the question may be asked in a contemptuous spirit. (19) **hand of Ephraim**, regarded as the ruling tribe.[a]

Runic staves.—At Umea, in Sweden, a person whom Dr. Clarke visited, "produced several ancient Runic staves, such as are known in Sweden under the name of Runic almanacs, or Runic calendars. They were all of wood, about three feet and a half long, shaped like the straight swords represented in churches upon the brazen sepulchre-plates of our Saxon ancestors. The blades were on each side engraved with Runic characters and signs, like hieroglyphics, extending their whole length. The signs were explained to us as those of the months, and the characters denoted the weeks and days. The Runic staves which had been given to us were afterwards exhibited at Morvana, and in the different places through which we passed, in the hope of procuring more. We afterward saw others; but they were always rare, and considered more as curious antiquities than things in actual use: although the inhabitants were well acquainted with them, and were often able to explain the meaning of the characters upon them, and the purpose for which these instruments were made, especially in this part of Sweden. We saw one of more elaborate workmanship, where the Runic characters had been very elegantly engraved upon a stick like a physician's cane; but this last seemed to be of a more modern date. In every instance it was evident, from some of the marks upon them, that their first owners were Christians: the different lines and characters denoting the fasts and festivals, golden numbers, dominical letter, epact, etc. But the custom of thus preserving written records upon rods or sticks is of the highest antiquity. There is an allusion to this custom in Ezekiel xxxvii. 16—20, where mention is made of something very similar to the Runic staff." Nearly nine centuries before the age of Ezekiel's prophecy, Moses used rods in the same manner (Numbers xvii. 2, 3). We may now see satisfactorily the use to which these written rods were in after-ages applied, as illustrated by the Runic staves, which have generally the form of a sword or sceptre, being the ensigns of office and dignity borne in the hands by the priests, the elders, and princes of the people. The recurved rods of the priests among the Greeks, and the crosier of a modern bishop, had the same origin.[b]

20—23. (20) **before their eyes**, "as a visible token or pledge of the truth of what I enjoin thee to speak to them." (21, 22) **one king**, the Messiah. (23) **idols**,[a] as we have already

who settled in Judæa.

There is infinitely more glory in the man Christ Jesus than in all generations of men put together; in Him alone divinity and humanity are for ever united.

b F. Morgan.

a Je. iii. 18, l. 4; Zec. x. 6.

"If a thing reflects no light, it is black; if it reflects part of the rays, it is blue, or indigo, or red; but if it reflects them all, it is white. If we are like Christ, we shall seek, not to absorb, but to reflect the light which falls upon us from heaven upon others, and thus we shall become pure and spotless; for this is the meaning of the 'white robes' which the saints wear in glory."—*Beecher.*

Christ pleased not Himself, in order to save us. How many of us please ourselves, and never think that we are displeasing Him.

It is hard work for the soul to pick up a living in light literature.

b Burder.

a 2 Co. vi. 16.

Christ, in our nature, was pur

and spotless. His appearance in this world was as if a crystal stream were to run through a muddy channel, without being defiled by it. "Without books, God is silent, justice dormant, natural science at a stand, philosophy lame, letters dumb, and all things involved in Cimmerian darkness."—*Bartholin, b Dr. Green's Lectures to Children on the Bible:*

a Is. lx. 21; Joel iii. 20; Am. ix. 15.

b Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4; Is. lv. 3; Je. xxxii. 40.

c Am. ix. 11; Jno. i. 14; Re. xxi. 3.

v. 24. *H. Thompson*, 179.

"All the sobriety which religion needs or requires, is that which real earnestness produces. Tears and shadows are not needful to sobriety. Smiles and cheerfulness are as much its elements. When men say, Be sober, they usually mean, Be stupid; but when the Bible says, Be sober, it means, Rouse up, and let fly the earnestness and vivacity of life. The old Scriptural sobriety was effectually *doing;* the later ascetic sobriety is effectual *dulness*." — *H. W. Beecher.*

seen, this has been fulfilled to the present day. No people witness more simply and purely to the Divine *unity* than do the Jews.

Christ in the Scriptures.—I remember reading once, among the stories of old times, of a certain architect who had to build a temple. It was to be a very large and splendid one: and the architect was very anxious that it should be known in after ages that he had planned and built it. But he was not allowed, by the king who employed him, to write his name upon any part of it. After much thought, therefore, he most cleverly so arranged it that the building itself should, in a hundred different ways, take the form of the letters of which his name was made up. No one, perhaps, on first walking in would notice any more than the walls and pillars, the figures upon the ceiling, or the lines of the variously-coloured floor. But after a time, as he looked attentively, the shapes of letters would appear; some large and stretching all across the building, others very small; but all so placed together as to spell the same word. And it would not be long before above, below, and all around he would read, whichever way he turned his eye, the name of the architect of the temple.*b*

24—28. (24) David, *etc.*, Is. xl. 11: Je. xxiii. 5, xxx. 9; Eze. xxxiv. 23. (25) dwell, securely and permanently.*a* (26) covenant of peace, ch. xxxiv. 24.*b* my sanctuary, fulfilled in the spiritual sense. The Church is God's earthly temple. (27) tabernacle, or earthly dwelling-place.*c* Zerubbabel's temple was a partial fulfilment. (28) sanctify, in sense of setting apart, and consecrating.

Confessing Christ.—St. Augustine relates, in his *Confessions*, that one Victorinus, a great man at Rome, who had many rich heathen friends and relations, was converted to the Christian religion. He repaired to a friend of his, also a convert, and told him secretly that he too was a Christian. "I will not believe thee to be a Christian," said the other, "until I see thee openly profess it in the church." "What," said Victorinus, "do the church walls make a Christian?" But directly the answer came to his own heart—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels." He was ready to bear the scorn and persecution of his heathen friends, that he might honour his Master in a public confession of His name. It cost something to acknowledge Christ in those early days of His Church. When Symphorianus, a young Roman, acknowledged himself a believer in Jesus, he was seized and scourged nearly to death, and then dragged away to a place of execution. His heroic Christian mother walked by his side, not shrieking and bewailing his terrible fate, as her mother's heart prompted, but encouraging and cheering him with such words as these: "Son, my son, remember life eternal! Look up to heaven! Lift up thine eye to Him that reigneth there! Life is not taken from thee, but exchanged for a better." At these words, the young man's heart was wondrously cheered, as if God had sent an angel to strengthen him. He went to the block with a face all glowing with holy joy. What power but that of a "living God" could sustain a mother and son in such an hour? What a glorious exchange was such a belief for the dead system of heathen worship in which they had been born!

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.

1—7. (1, 2) Gog, a symbolical name.[a] Magog, Ge. x. 2. Meshech and Tubal, ch. xxvii. 13, xxxii. 26. (3, 4) hooks, *etc.*, ch. xxxix. 2. The fig. is taken from the mode of securing the Nile crocodiles. (5) Persia, *etc.*, ch. xxvii. 10, xxx. 5. (6) Gomer, the Cimmerians of Crim-Tartary,[b] Ge. x. 2. Togarmah, Armenians. The northern parts of Asia Minor, ch. xxvii. 14. (7) be thou prepared, this is God's challenge to a contest. "In it there is a strain of irony, as if it were foolish indeed to measure strength with Jehovah."

Gog and Magog (chapters xxxviii., xxxix.).—The vision of Gog and Magog, or the Church's struggle with the world. I. The strife. 1. Fiercely aggressive; 2. Insidious; 3. Widespread; 4. Terrible. II. The victory. 1. Divinely wrought; 2. Overwhelming destruction of evil; 3. Complete flourishing of the good.[c]

8—13. (8) latter years, beyond the historical events with which Ezekiel has been dealing. Comp. the conflict in the Bk. of Rev. always waste, better, for a long time. (9) storm, suddenly, and with a great show of terror. (10) think an evil thought, *i.e.* one that designs evil to others, and works evil to thyself. (11) unwalled villages, *comp.* Zec. ii. 4, 5. safely, securely, without thought of approaching danger. (12) take a spoil, easily, without any conflict. (13) Sheba, *etc.*, nations far removed from each other.[a]

14—17. (14) know it, and try to take advantage of such prosperity and security.[a] (15) north parts, *v.* 6. (16) as a cloud, *v.* 9. sanctified in thee, *i.e.* honoured in thy overwhelming destruction. (17) thou he, *etc.*, the final opposer of God, represented by the Pharaohs and Sennacheribs of former times. God is not previously mentioned by name.

Cardinal Mazarin.—Cardinal Mazarin, reputed the most consummate statesman of his age, but whose great aim in life was to gratify his ambition, when on his death-bed, alarmed by the stings of conscience, cried out, "Oh my poor soul! what must become of thee! Whither wilt thou go?" Then turning to the queen mother of France, he said, "Madame, your favours have undone me; were I to live again, I would be anything rather than a courtier."[b]

18—23. (18) my fury, as human passion makes the blood to fly up into the face. (19) jealousy, *etc.*, ch. xxxvi. 5, xxxix. 25. shaking, indicating alterations of kingdoms and governments. (20) fishes, *etc.*, the figs. of the verse are taken from the effects of a terrible earthquake.[a] steep places, or towers. (21) sword, *comp.* ch. xiv. 17. against his brother, the sign of intestine quarrels, which are fatal to any enterprise. (22) plead, urge my cause by the agency of pestilence and fighting. hailstones, ch. xiii. 11. (23). magnify myself, ch. xxxvi. 23, xxxvii. 28.

Madness of ambition.—I have read of Menecrates, a physician, that would needs be counted a god, and took no other fee of his patients but their vow to worship him. Dionysius Syracusanus,

[a] Standing for the world regarded as antagonistic to God.

[b] *Wordsworth.*

"He loves not Christ at all who does not love Christ above all."—*Austin.*

[c] *U. R. Thomas.*

[a] Merchants from these nations are represented as coming to God's camp to see if they can buy the spoil.

[a] Comp. Re. xvi. 13, 14.

Love Christ not for what He has, or gives simply, but love Him for His own sake.

[b] *R. T. S.*

[a] "The Prophets often describe God's judgments upon particular countries or persons, as if it were a dissolution of the whole world, bec. His particular judgments are an earnest of the general judgment."—*Lowth.*

"Where lust and turbulent ambition reign, death

took swift vengeance."—*Young.*
b T. Adams.

hearing of this, invited him to a banquet; and, to honour him according to his desire, set before him nothing but a censer of frankincense, with the smoke whereof he was feasted till he starved, while others fed on good meat. This showed the great naturalist a natural fool, a madman. Sapor, a Persian king, wrote himself "King of kings, Brother to the Sun and Moon, and Partner with the Stars." Yet, alas! he was a man, therefore a madman in the arrogation of his style.[b]

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-NINTH.

a "The details are set forth in order to carry out the allegory, and their very extravagance, so to speak, points out that we have but the shadow of a great spiritual reality, wh. man can only faintly represent, and feebly grasp *in a figure.*" —*Spk. Com.*

"Ill-weaved ambition, how much art thou shrunk." —*Shakespeare.*

1—7. (1) Gog, ch. xxxviii. 1. (2) leave .. thee, marg. "Strike thee with six plagues," or "draw thee back, with a hook of six teeth," ch. xxxviii. 4. (3) thy bow, chief of the war weapons. (4) fall, smitten and defeated. ravenous birds, that crowd battle fields. (5) open field, where shall be no shelter from the ravenous creatures. It was a great indignity to leave dead bodies exposed. (6) fire, *comp.* Re. xx. 9. isles, including coast lands. (7) so, *i.e.* by this manifestation of power in the discomfiture of My people's enemies.[a]

Ambition self-condemned.—After his final defeat at Waterloo, the first Napoleon continued for some hours in moody silence, without food. None of his attendants ventured to address him: but at length some coffee was sent in by the hands of a little peasant lad, known to the emperor. After waiting awhile, the child with frank simplicity exclaimed, "Eat, sire: it will do you good." "Do you not belong to Gonesse?" asked Napoleon. "No sire; I come from Pierrefite." "Where your parents have a cottage and some acres of land?" "Yes, sire." "This is happiness," was the emphatic comment of the modern Alexander.

a Joel ii. 11, 31; Zep. i. 14; Re. vi. 17, xvi. 17, xxi. 6.

b "The features of the prophecy show clearly that it is not to be understood literally but spiritually."—*Wordsworth.*

c "The burning of the foe's weapons implies that nothing belonging to them should be left to pollute the land. The seven years spent on this work implies the completeness of the cleansing, and the people's zeal for purity." —*Fausset.*
r. 8. *H. W. Sullivan.* i. 18.
d Roberts.

8—10. (8) it is come, *i.e.* the time of the great threatened destruction.[a] The Prophet declares it to be so certain that it is "as good as done." (9) dwell .. cities, the small remnant left in the land would find a supply of fuel for seven years in the multitude of weapons left on the battle-field. This is to be regarded as a poetical figure rather than historical fact.[b] hand-staves, or javelins. seven years,[c] the number seven is here treated as the ideal or perfect number. (10) spoil, *etc.*, Is. xiv. 2, xxxiii. 1.

The predicted day (*v.* 8).—I. There have been great historic days whose events were clearly predicted. II. There have been important days in individual history whose events were predicted. III. We may take these facts as the basis of an argument for the fulfilling of Divine threats and promises to various characters.

Smell of a battle-field.—This refers to the dreadful stench which should arise from the dead bodies of Gog. The Tamul translation has it, "cause to stop the noses." The moment people smell anything offensive, they immediately press the nostrils together with their fingers. They say of a bad smell, "It has stopped my nose;" which means the nose is so full of that, it is not sensible of any other smell. The figure is much used in reference to the decayed oysters at the pearl fishery.[d]

11—16. (11) Gog, poetical name for the enemies of Israel. place .. graves, where he expected a triumph he shall find a grave. valley, *etc.*, this may be an imaginary valley, seen in the Prophet's vision, or a place on the high road, E. of the Dead Sea,[a] the highway between Syria and Petra, and Egypt. passengers, or travellers. stop the noses,[b] with the stench of the corpses. Hamon-gog, or "the multitude of Gog." (12) seven months, during all this time they would be finding scattered corpses.[c] (13) to them, *i.e.* to Israel. A day of joy and triumph. (14) sever out, set apart to this work. men .. employment, dedicated entirely to this work until it was completed.[d] with the passengers, *i.e.* with the help of the passers by, as next *v.* (15) set .. sign, to direct the attention of the buriers to it. (16) Hamonah, or "the multitude."

The rival armies.—I. The enemies of the Lord. 1. Their character. (1) The idolater; (2) The forgetful; (3) The indifferent; (4) The undecided; (5) The reckless. 2. Their doom. They perish—(1) Without God, and so cut off from the only source of true life; (2) Without hope; (3) Fighting against God. II. The friends of the Lord. The course of the sun is—1. Very quiet; 2. Gladdening; 3. Regular and sure; 4. One of increasing brightness.[e]

Continual employment (*v.* 14).—Men of continual employment! and women also. These are the persons everywhere needed to originate and sustain Christian enterprise throughout the world. From those who come forward to offer themselves for the work it is not easy to discriminate at first, but on making a farther selection from those who have undergone a measure of testing or probation, it is on those who have shown themselves to be "men of continual employment" that we would rely. The remark has been repeatedly made, and experience confirms it, that to accomplish much it is only necessary for us to proceed steadily and patiently in the doing of a little; we must, in the words of the philosopher, be whole men to one thing at a time: shunning alike the temptation to attempt two or three things at once, and do each of them badly, or that much more common, probably, to pause after the completion of some work in hand, and spend too much time in the consideration of what is to follow and how it is to be carried out. "Work like a star, unhasting but unresting," says a great modern author, an example himself of what he commends: and it is thus by the continuity of our employment that we acquire and strengthen habits which are so valuable as powers for good. Even our relaxations (for such must have their place) need not interrupt the flow of our work, though forming a variation; if life be compared to a stream, we must not allow ourselves any stagnation, though the current of our employment runs more softly and slowly for a time, as a river does when it widens out temporarily into shallows, to pursue its course again beyond in its ordinary channel. And in our inner life, in the culture of the heart and affections, it is most necessary that the work should be steadily pursued. A day's, a week's, a month's suspension has consequences extending far beyond the period of intermission, and casts a shadow which may be projected far into the future.

17—22. (17) feathered fowl, all carrion birds. sacrifice, the heaps of slain are regarded as a sacrificial feast provided by

a "A place frightful in its physical character, and admonitory of past judgments." —*Spk. Com.*

b Comp. the same Heb. word, trans. *muzzle*, in De. xxv. 4.

c "Usually the survivors of an army bury their own dead: but here the rout is so complete that the house of Israel bury the corpses of their foes." — *Wordsworth.*

d Is. lxvi. 24.

e H. G. Parish, B.A.

"Employment, which Galen calls 'Nature's physician,' is so essential to human happiness, that indolence is justly considered the mother of misery." -*Burton.*

"Assure yourself that employment is one of the best remedies for the disappointments of life. Let even your calamity have the liberal effect of occupying you in some active virtue, so shall you in a manner remember others till you forget yourself."—*Pratt.*

"As fire is kept up by blowing, and putting on wood; so the grace of God must be daily stirred by the use of the Word, sacraments, and prayer, by meditating, striving, seeking, and knocking."—*Cawdray.*

a "The cattle of Palestine are generally small,

and decidedly inferior to those of more northern climes. The cause is doubtless to be found in the scanty pastures of a land laid waste for many centuries by ever-returning foes, and many of whose springs of water have been drying up; but there are districts in which the cattle are finer, and in a far better condition. There are prob. as fine 'bulls of Bashan' now grazing on the plains of the Hauran as there were in king David's time."—*Van Lennep.*

b Comp. Ps. lxxvi. 6.

c McCosh.

God for them. (18) rams, *etc.*, prob. here figures of the various classes of people in the slain armies. fatlings of Bashan,[a] De. xxxii. 14. (19) drunken, or satiated. (20) my table, poetical carrying out of the figure of the sacrificial feasts. chariots, better, charioteers.[b] (21) set . . heathen, ch. xxxviii. 16, 23. (22) know, or fully apprehend and realise. God is thus known in His mercies and judgments.

God reflected.—The beautiful rays coming from the face of God, and shining in such loveliness around us, are reflected and refracted when they come in contact with the human heart. Each heart is apt to receive only such as please it, and to reject the others. Hence the many-coloured aspects, some of them hideous in the extreme, in which God is presented to different nations and individuals. Hence the room for each man fashioning a god after his own heart. An evil conscience, reflecting only the red rays, calls up a god who delights in blood. The man of fine sentiment, reflecting only the softer rays, paints from the hues of his own feelings a god of mere sensibility, tender as that of the hero of a modern romance. The man of glowing imagination will array in gorgeous but delusive colouring, and in the flowing drapery of majesty and grandeur, beneath which, however, there is little or no reality. The observer of laws will represent Him as the embodiment of order, as blank and as black as the sun looks when we have gazed upon him, till we are no longer sensible of his brightness.[c]

a "They were not carried away by their enemies bec. I wanted power to rescue them, but as a just punishment of their sins."—*Lowth.*

b "After they have become sensible of their guilt, and ashamed of it."—*Fausset.*

"We have employments assigned to us for every circumstance in life. When we are alone, we have our thoughts to watch; in the family, our tempers; and in company, our tongues."—*Hannah More.*

c Derham.

23—26. (23) hid I my face,[a] the character of Israel's captivity, as Divine *chastisement* for sin will be made plain when God has restored and sanctified them. (24) uncleanness, by reason of their idolatry. (25) bring again, ch. xxxiv. 13, etc. whole house, the entire covenant people. (26) borne their shame, *i.e.* the shame which is the due of their iniquities.[b]

Evidence of God.—A man that should meet with a palace beset with pleasant gardens, adorned with stately avenues, furnished with well-contrived aqueducts, cascades, and all other appendages conducing to convenience or pleasure, would easily imagine that proportionable architecture and magnificence were within: but we should conclude the man was out of his wits that should assert and plead that all was the work of chance, or other than of some wise and skilful hand. And so, when we survey the bare outworks of this our globe, when we see so vast a body accoutred with so noble a furniture of air, light, and gravity, with everything, in short, that is necessary to the preservation and security of the globe itself, or that conduceth to the life, health, and happiness, to the propagation and increase of all the prodigious variety of creatures the globe is stocked with: when we see nothing wanting, nothing redundant or frivolous, nothing botching or ill-made, but that everything, even in the very appendages alone, exactly answereth all its ends and occasions,—what else can be concluded but that all was made with manifest design, and that all the whole structure is the work of some intelligent Being, some Artist of power and skill equivalent to such a work?[c]

a "The pouring out of His Spirit is a pledge that He will hide His

27—29. (27) am sanctified, ch. xxxvi. 23. (28) which caused, *Heb.* "by My causing them." (29) poured . . spirit,[a] Joel ii. 28. There is immediate reference to the grace

given to the returned captives ; but further and fuller reference to the gift of the Holy Ghost to the early Church.[b]

Influences of the Holy Spirit.—The same shower blesses various lands in different degrees, according to their respective susceptibilities. It makes the grass to spring up in the mead, the grain to vegetate in the field, the shrub to grow on the plain, and the flowers to blossom in the garden ; and these are garnished with every hue of loveliness, the lily and the violet, the rose and the daisy ; all these worketh the same spirit that renews the face of the earth. The influences of the Holy Spirit, descending on the moral soil, produce "blessing in variety," convictions in the guilty, illumination in the ignorant, holiness in the defiled, strength in the feeble, and comfort in the distressed. As the Spirit of Holiness, He imparts a pure taste ; as the Spirit of Glory, He throws a radiance over the character ; as the Spirit of Life, He revives religion ; as the Spirit of Truth, He gives transparency to the conduct ; as the Spirit of Prayer, He melts the soul into devotion ; and as the Spirit of Grace, He embues with benevolence, and covers the face of the earth with the works of faith and labours of love.[c]

face no more."—*Fausset.*

b "St. Peter distinctly appropriates these prophecies to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the inauguration of the Church of Christ by that miraculous event."—*Spk. Com.*

r. 29. *J. Howe,* v. 209.

c Dr. Jenkyn.

CHAPTER THE FORTIETH.

1—5. (1) **in .. captivity,** "this was the fifteenth year from the eighteenth of Josiah, the year of his memorable passover."[a] **hand .. me,** ch. i. 3. (2) **visions of God,** or Divinely-sent visions. **high mountain,** fr. which a broad and general view could be obtained. Reference may be to Mount Zion, from wh. a good view of Mt. Moriah could be obtained. **frame,** or fabric.[b] The Heb. seems to intimate that this was *upon* the Mount. (3) **brass,** *i.e.* brightly shining. **line of flax,**[c] for measuring the ground. **measuring reed,**[d] for the walls. (4) **declare,** *etc.*, so that it may be to them a model in rebuilding the temple. (5) **wall,** *i.e.* boundary wall. **and an handbreadth,** or the cubit used by the man in measuring was one handbreadth over the cubit used in Chaldæa.

Reverence for the house of God.—

"When once thy foot enters the church, beware!
God is more there than thou ; for thou art there
Only by His permission. Then, beware ;
And make thyself all reverence and fear.
Kneeling ne'er spoil'd silk stocking : quit thy state ;
All equal are within the church's gate.

"Let vain or busy thought have there no part ;
Bring not thy plots, thy plough, thy pleasure thither ;
Christ purged His temple—so must thou thy heart.
All worldly thoughts are but thieves met together
To cozen thee : look to thy actions well,
For churches either are our heaven or hell."[e]

a 2 Ki. xxiii. 22.

In this and the remaining chapters of Ezekiel, is given an ideal picture of the restored Jewish temple.

b "The words describe the situation of the temple on the south side of Mount Zion, wh., with all its courts, buildings, and walls encompassing the courts and the whole area, or holy mountain, resembled a city for bigness."—*Lowth.*

c Zec. ii. 1.

d Re. xxi. 15.

e G. Herbert.

6—10. (6) **gate .. east,** the east-gate building is described as a model for all the buildings at the other gates. **stairs,** for their number see *v.* 22. **threshold,** or lintel, the upper part of the door-case. The threshold proper is the lower part of the door-case : and he would not need to go upstairs to measure this. (7) **little chamber,** prepared for the Levitical guard, who attended

a "Along the wall of the porch were chambers, three on each side ; *v.* 10."—*Lowth.*

"Guard-rooms." —*Kiel.*

These chambers were about 10ft. 6in. square.

"Be always employed about some rational thing, that the devil find thee not idle."-*Jerome.*

b St. Cyprian.

to and kept the gate.[a] between, *i.e.* the passage running between. (8) porch, or portico. (9) inward, *i.e.* towards the court of the temple. (10) posts, or bases.

The temple of God.—Be diligent. Sometimes speak to God, at other times hear Him speak to you. Let Him regulate your soul. Whom He hath made rich, none shall make poor. There can be no penury with him whose heart has once been enriched with celestial bounty. Roofs arched with gold, and palaces adorned with marble, are vile in comparison with that house which the Lord has chosen to be His temple, in the which the Holy Ghost dwells. Illuminate this house with the light of righteousness. Its ornaments shall never fade, and it shall dwell hereafter in spotless beauty and eternal majesty.[b]

11—15. (11) length of the gate, or gateway. The extent of the gate. (12) space, a limit, or barrier, to protect the guard-rooms. (13) from the roof, *etc.*, *i.e.* across the gate-building from north to south. From the roof of one chamber to the roof of the corresponding opposite one. (14) posts, or columns.[a] (15) face, or front.

The gate Beautiful.—This was the highest gate of the temple, being fifty cubits high, or ten cubits higher than the other gates, the cubit being the length of a man's arm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. Nine gates were completely covered with gold and silver, but this with Corinthian brass, which was of greater value. Its doors were forty cubits high. The ascent to it was by fifteen steps. The whole of the workmanship was of the very best kind, and it was an addition made to the temple by Herod the Great.[b]

a "This hall or colonnade extended the whole breadth of the building to the pavement; *v.* 18. Outside the building, on the pavement, was a series of pillars." —*Spk. Com.*
"To be employed is to be happy." —*Gray.*

b Ingram Cobbin, M.A.

16—19. (16) narrow, Heb. *closed:* fitted with network, or lattices.[a] arches, prob. projections, or bays in the wall. (17) outward court, answering to the Court of the Women in Herod's temple. The first on passing the gate. pavement, of mosaic work. thirty chambers, over the cloisters, and supported by them. (18) lower pavement, on the outer court, wh. was lower than the inner court. (19) without, *marg.* "from without."

Three distinct schools of European architecture.—Now there have as yet been three distinct schools of European architecture. I say European, because Asiatic and African architectures belong so entirely to other races and climates, that there is no questioning of them here; only, in passing, I will simply assure you that whatever is good or great in Egypt, and Syria, and Judæa, is just good or great for the same reasons as the buildings on our side of the Bosphorus. We Europeans, then, have had three great religions: the Greek, which was the worship of the God of Wisdom and Power; the Mediæval, which was the worship of the God of Judgment and Consolation; the Renaissance, which was the worship of the God of Pride and Beauty: these three we have had—they are past—and now, at last, we English have got a fourth religion, and a God of our own.[b]

a "Closed windows, with shut lattices, the bars of which, being let into the wall, could not be opened or shut at pleasure."—*Gesenius.*
"Taste is, in general, considered as that faculty of the human mind by which we perceive and enjoy whatever is beautiful or sublime in the works of nature or art." —*Archibald Allison.*

b Ruskin.

20—23. (20) that looked, *Heb.* "whose face was." (21) arches, *v.* 16. (22) seven steps, *v.* 6. "There was the same number of steps, no doubt, to each of the gates from the precincts to the outer court." (23) over against, better, proportionable with.

There are men with eyes in their heads, shrewd and self-willing withal, who are yet blind to half the

National architecture the exponent of a national religion.—Every great national architecture has been the result and exponent of a great national religion. You can't have bits of it here, bits there: you must have it everywhere, or nowhere. It is not the exponent of a theological dogma,—it is not the monopoly of a clerical company,—it is not the hieroglyphic writing of an initiated priesthood; it is the manly language of a people inspired by resolute and common purpose, and rendering resolute and common fidelity to the legible laws of an undoubted God.[a]

24—27. (24) according . . measures, *i.e.* to those previously given. (25) windows, *v.* 16. (26) seven steps, *v.* 22. (27) gate to gate, or the distance between the gates.

Grandeur of an abbey.—

How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads
To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,
By its own weight made steadfast and immovable,
Looking tranquillity! It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.[a]

28—31. (28) by . . gate, or through the south gate. (29) little chambers, *comp. v.* 7. (30) arches, *v.* 16. (31) utter, or outward.

A carved pillar (*v.* 31).—A fanciful text for a fanciful hearer. The rudest people find pleasure in contemplating sculpture and carving. Here is a carved pillar; a palm tree is an emblem of the righteous: a reminder to him who treads the courts of the temple that he should be planted there, then he will flourish as a palm, become fruitful, and himself, like the carved emblem, become a pillar in the house of God.

Old cathedrals.—When we enter one of those antique piles in southern Germany, or in Spain—for there only can a Catholic Gothic cathedral be seen in all its glory,—I know not that it is possible for the heart of man to desire any addition to the magnetic solemnity of the whole scene. The tall, narrow windows, quite dark with the long purple garments of pictured martyrs, apostles, and kings, tinge every ray that passes through them with the colours and the memory of a thousand years of devotion.[a]

32—34. (32) into, before, they were looking at the inner court, now they actually entered it. (33, 34) eight steps, *comp.* the seven steps of the other gates: *vv.* 22, 26.

Wonders of the Bible.—If you ever tried it, you must have been struck with the few solid thoughts, the few suggestive ideas which survive the perusal of the most brilliant of human books. Few of them can stand three readings; and of the memoriabilia which you have marked in your first reading, on reverting to them, you find many of those were not so striking or weighty or original as you thought. But the Word of God is solid: it will stand a thousand readings; and the man who has gone over it the most frequently and carefully is the surest of finding new wonders there.[a]

35—38. (35) north gate, similar in all respects to the others. (36, 37) chambers, *etc.*, see *vv.* 7, 16. (38) washed . . offering, Le. i. 11—13.

pleasures of existence. The many-tinted sky, the sparkling firmament, the varied earth, the boundless ocean, are not for them; they see them, indeed, and so does an ass.
a Ruskin.

"Taste is that sensibility by which we recognise the beauties and deformities of nature or art, deriving pleasure from the one, and suffering pain from the other."—*Wayland.*
a Congreve.

"Taste is an attainment after a poet has been disciplined by experience, and has added to genius that talent by which he knows what part of his genius he can make acceptable and intelligible to the portion of mankind for which he writes."—*Coleridge.*

a Washington Irving.

"May not taste be compared to that exquisite sense of the bee, which instantly discovers and extracts the quintessence of every flower, and disregards all the rest?"—*Greville.*

a Rev. James Hamilton.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever. Its loveliness in-

creases; it will never pass into nothingness."—*Keats.*

Historical value of architecture.—Architecture is the printing-press of all ages, and gives a history of the state of the society in which it was erected, from the cromlech of the Druids to those toy-shops of royal bad taste—Carlton House and the Brighton Pavilion. The Tower and Westminster Abbey are glorious pages in the history of time, and tell the story of an iron despotism, and the cowardice of unlimited power.[a]

a Lady Morgan.

39—43. (39) **porch**, "not under the covered portico, wh. was only ten cubits broad, but in the angles formed by the porch and gate-front. These tables were blocks for killing and preparing the sacrifices.[a] (40) **without**, on either side the entrance of the north gate, from the inner court. (41) **eight tables**, these were prob. of wood. (42) **four tables**, *i.e.* four others. (43) **hooks**, to wh. the beasts might be fastened: or perhaps on which the carcases might be hung. **the tables**, prob. the stone tables.

a "If the gate-building projected with its porch forward on to the pavement of the inner court, the tables were fitly placed for carrying out the directions of the law."—*Spk. Com.*

Situation for building.—

Meantime the moist malignity to shun
Of burthen'd skies, mark where the dry champaign
Swells into cheerful hills; where marjoram
And thyme, the love of bees, perfume the air;
And where the cynnorrhodon with the rose
For fragrance vies: for in the thirsty soil
Most fragrant breathe th' aromatic tribes.
There bid thy roofs high on the basking steep
Ascend, there light thy hospitable fires,
And let them see the winter morn arise,
The summer ev'ning blushing in the west;
While with umbrageous oaks the ridge behind
O'erhung, defends you from the blust'ring north,
And bleak affliction of the peevish east.
O! when the growling winds contend, and all
The sounding forest fluctuates in the storm,
To sink in warm repose, and hear the din
Howl o'er the steady battlements, delights
Above the luxury of vulgar sleep.[b]

"Taste and elegance, though they are reckoned only among the smaller and secondary morals, yet are of no mean importance in the regulation of life. A moral taste is not of force to turn vice into virtue; but it recommends virtue, with something like the blandishments of pleasure."—*Burke.*

b Armstrong.

44—49. (44) **singers**, 1 Chr. vi. 31, 32. (45) **prospect**, or outlook. **charge of the house**,[a] Nu. iii. 25, etc. (46) **charge of the altar**, Le. vi. 12, 13. Zadok, 1 Ki. ii. 27, 35. (47) **court**, *i.e.* the inner court. (48) **porch . . house**, *i.e.* of the sanctuary, or temple itself. Comp. Sol.'s porch, 1 Ki. vi. 3.[b] (49) **steps**, LXX. has "ten steps." **pillars . . posts**,[c] "meaning that upon the bases (posts) stood shafts (pillars). These shafts were prob. in the form of palm trees."

a "The priests who keep watch as guards of the temple." — *Vulgate.*

b The breadth does not agree with that of Sol.'s porch, the length does.

c Comp. 1 Ki. vii. 21; 2 Chr. iii. 17.

Music.—

Amid the golden gifts which Heaven
Has left, like portions of its light on earth,
None hath such influence as music hath.
The painter's hues stand visible before us
In power and beauty—we can trace the thought*a*,
Which are the workings of the poet's mind:
But music is a mystery, and viewless
Even when present, and is less man's act,
And less within his order; for the hand
That can call forth the tones, yet cannot tell

"Beauty was lent to nature as the type of heaven's unspeakable and holy joy, where all perfection makes the sum of bliss."—*Mrs. Hale.*

Whither they go, or if they live or die,
When floated once beyond his feeble ear;
And then, as if it were an unreal thing,
The wind will sweep from the neglected strings,
As rich a swell as ever minstrel drew.[d]

d L. E. Landon.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIRST.

1—6. (1) **temple**, the actual sanctuary, the holy place:[a] 1 Ki. vi. 17. **posts**, *i.e.* the piers, or door-cases on each side of the entrance. **tabernacle**, Heb. *ohel*, prop. the tabernacle of the congregation. Here, the interior, or covered portion of the temple. (2) **door**, or entrance. (3) **inward**, or inside.[b] (4) **measured**, *etc.*, comp. the holy of holies of Sol.'s temple.[c] **most holy**, the Oracle as distinguished fr. the temple or holy place. (5) **wall**, or outer wall, wh. was of immense thickness. **side chamber**, *comp.* 1 Ki. vi. 5—10. (6) **three**, *i.e.* there were 3 stories of 30 chambers in each. **hold . . house**, *i.e.* the beams were made to rest, not on the actual wall, but on rests projecting from the wall.

The burning of the temple.—While the holy house was on fire, everything was plundered that came to hand; and ten thousand of those that were caught were slain. Nor was there a commiseration of any age, or any reverence of gravity; but children, and old men, and profane persons, and priests, were all slain in the same manner. So that this war went round all sorts of men, and brought them to destruction; and as well those that made supplication for their lives, as those that defended themselves by fighting. The flame was also carried a long way and made an echo, together with the groans of those that were slain. And because this hill was high, and the works of the temple were very great, one would have thought the whole city had been on fire. Nor can one imagine anything either greater or more terrible than this noise. For there was at once a shout of the Roman legions, who were marching altogether: and a sad clamour of the seditious who now were surrounded with fire and sword. The people also that were left above were beaten back upon the enemy, and under a great consternation, and made sad moans at the calamity they were under. The multitude also that was in the city joined in this outcry with those that were upon the hill. And besides many of those that were worn away by the famine, and their mouths almost closed, when they saw the fire of the holy house, they exerted their utmost strength, and brake out into groans and outcries again. . . . . One would have thought that the hill itself, on which the temple stood, was seething hot; as full of fire in every part of it, that the blood was larger in quantity than the fire, and those that were slain, more in number than those that slew them. For the ground did nowhere appear visible for the dead bodies that lay on it; but the soldiers went over heaps of those bodies, as they ran upon such as fled from them.[d]

7—12. (7) **enlarging**, of the upper chambers, by the thinning of the outer wall to form rests for the joists. **winding about**, of the staircase. **by the midst**, or middle story. The staircases were inside the house, and so went through the middle

a "The holy place, to which we have come from the fore-court. The measurement begins from the east wall, where the entrance was. This wall had pillars six cubits broad, and bet. the pillars a door ten cubits broad, with doorposts five cubits broad on each side; so that the whole breadth of the wall was thirty-two cubits." — *Ked.*

b "It is not said, *He brought me in*, but *He went in*, because the holy of holies was not to be entered even by a priest like Ezekiel." — *Spk. Com.*

c 1 Ki. vi. 20.

"The criterion of true beauty is, that it increases on examination; of false, that it lessens." — *Lord Greville.* "Beauty unaccompanied by virtue is a flower without perfume." — "Beauty is like an almanac: if it last a year, it is well." — *T. Adams.*

d *Josephus.*

a "Winding stairs, which enlarged as the rooms did, went up between each

two chambers from the bottom to the top; and there were two doors at the top of each pair of stairs, one door opening into one room, the other into that over against it." — *Lowth.*

b Lit. "Six cubits to the armpit."

c "Rather, 'and so also was what was left free to the side chambers of the house.'" — *Wordsworth.*

d "As the rows of chambers ran E. and W., one set of chambers opened to the south, another set to the north." — *Spk. Com.*

e Irving.

a 1 Ki. vi. 15, 16.

"The word *cieled* means *overlaid, panelled.* 'Ciel' in French meaning 'canopy' was soon spelt in English 'seele,' hence the participle 'seeled,' also written 'cieled.'" — *Bib. Things.*

"The human heart yearns for the beautiful in all ranks of life. The beautiful things that God makes are His gift to all alike. I know there are many of the poor who have fine feeling and a keen sense of the beautiful, which rusts out and dies because they are too hard pressed to procure it any gratification." — *Mrs. Stowe.*

b Hive.

story to the upper.[a] (8) six great cubits,[b] ch. xl. 5. This was the height of each story. (9) that . . left,[c] *viz.* the passage bet. these side chambers and the temple-wall. (10) between, *etc.*, from the outer wall to the wall of the court. (11) left, the passage running along.[d] (12) building, behind the sanctuary, in the vacant space, and prob. used for receiving the offal, etc., of the sacrifices.

An ancient chamber.—My chamber was in the old part of the mansion, the ponderous furniture of which might have been fabricated in the days of the giants. The room was panelled with cornices of heavy carved work, in which flowers and grotesque faces were strangely intermingled: and a row of black-looking portraits stared mournfully at me from the walls. The bed was of rich though faded damask, with a lofty tester, and stood in a niche opposite a bow window. I had scarcely got into bed when a strain of music seemed to break forth in the air just below the window. I listened, and found it proceeded from a band, which I concluded to be the waits from some neighbouring village. They went round the house, playing under the windows. I drew aside the curtains to hear them more distinctly. The moonbeams fell through the upper part of the casement, partially lighting up the antiquated apartment. The sounds, as they receded, became more soft and aerial, and seemed to accord with the quiet and moonlight. I listened and listened—they became more and more tender and remote; and as they gradually died away my head sunk upon the pillow, and I fell asleep.[e]

13–17. (13) house, or sanctuary proper, the holy place. separate place, or holy of holies. building, that mentioned in *v.* 12. (14) face, or front. (15) galleries, terrace-buildings; poss. the word means the side-chambers, *vv.* 6, 7. (16) cieled with wood, or overlaid with woodwork.[a] covered, or hidden from view from below. Or the meaning may be, covered with lattice-work. (17) by measure, *i.e.* even this woodwork was done by careful measurement.

Children and houses.—You all know what a house is. I will tell you why it is I think that girls and boys are like houses. I. How bright and fresh a newly-built and completely-furnished house is. II. A house has distinct compartments, rooms. There is, in children, the mind-room, the heart-room, the soul-room. The uses and relations of these (Ps. cxxxix. 14). III. A house is of no use if an entrance be not gained. Two doors,—ear, mouth. Two windows,—eyes. Bunyan's "ear-gate," "eye-gate," etc. IV. A house is a place to live in. Conscience the head of family; and desire, hope, thought, etc., members. V. A house may be broken into. Evil tempers, etc. "Watch!" VI. A house may catch fire. A bad passion will set a boy on fire. VII. Sometimes all inside are startled by a knock at the door. Desire, thought, conscience, etc., listen. "Behold I stand at the door and knock," etc. Conscience wishes to open. Passion says "You shall not." So say habit, desire, etc. VIII. There comes a time in the history of every house when it stands empty, when the tenants have left it to crumble into ruins and decay. Bodily house empty. Death. "How will it be with you when you leave your bodily house?" . . . I earnestly hope you will go out with the sure hope of taking up your abode in that house of which our Saviour said, "In My Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you."[b]

18—22. (18) made, or ornamented with carved work, in the wood, wh. took shape of cherubims, palm trees, etc. two faces, *comp.* ch. i. 10. As carved on the flat they could not show four faces. (19) made through, or the design was repeated all through the house. (20) unto . . door, *comp.* up to the windows, *v.* 16. (21) posts, or side pilasters. squared, not round, nor arched. face, or front. (22) altar, of incense, Ex. xxx. 1, etc.[a] table, another word for an altar.[b] before the Lord, in front of the holy of holies.[c]

Praxiteles.—Praxiteles, who flourished 364 years before Christ, was the sculptor of some of the most famous statues of antiquity. Among these were two Venuses, one clothed and the other naked. The first was purchased by the Khoans, who preferred it as the most decent. The Cnidians took the rejected one, which was so exquisitely beautiful, that many persons took a voyage to Cnidus for the sole purpose of seeing it. Nicomedes, king of Bythnia, was so desirous of possessing it, that he offered to pay all the public debts of Cnidus, which were large, as the price; but the citizens refused to part with it on any terms, regarding it as the principal glory of the state. Praxiteles having promised the choice of his works to Phryne, a lady to whom he was attached, she, in order to discover which he most valued, ran to him one day with the false intelligence that his house was on fire. "I am undone," he cried, "unless I save my Satyr and my Cupid." The lady having thus obtained an indisputable criterion, chose the Cupid as the most valuable of all his performances.[d]

23—26. (23) two doors, 1 Ki. vi. 31. The holy place and the holy of holies had two doors each. (24) turning leaves, *i.e.* each would turn back. (25) made, or carved. thick planks, made to form a kind of wainscot-work. (26) narrow windows, ch. xl. 16. thick planks, or wainscoting.[a]

Chambers in the Temple, and their furniture.—With three of the four rooms we have nothing to do. Two were bedrooms, and in the third and dreariest snuffled a restless boy, something proud of his dignity of clerk, something interested in the last number of the *Avenger of Blood*, yet something pining for the undignified pitching and tossing, carried on by mere boys, who were not clerks, in a yard behind. Sometimes the clink of the copper and the instant clamour of the antagonists were too much for him, and he left the Avenger roasting his father's murderer, and went sulkily to the window to gaze on the plebeians, and to wish that he had not risen from the ranks. Then nobler thoughts came over him; he remembered his salary, and the occasional order for the Adelphi, from his good-natured masters, and he went back to the half-cooked assassin who was being so signally served out by filial retribution. But the principal chamber was a pleasant one, handsomely carpeted, pictured from various collections, and not without its easy chairs for its owners, and similar accommodation for any friend. Philip Arundel's tastes were a little in the way of the Epicurean's above mentioned, but anything like fastidiousness had been corrected in Philip at college; and though there were some engravings, statuettes, and knick-knacks which the elegant gentleman would not have disdained, they were interspersed with articles that he would have removed with a pair of tongs *viâ* the window. Pipes of all kinds hung about, or littered the mantlepiece, which was further

a "The altar here is a cubit higher, and double the breadth to that of Moses, which is supposed to be agreeable to the dimensions of the altar made by Solomon, who did not exactly observe the proportions prescribed to Moses, in making the cherubims and other furniture of the temple."—*Lowth.*

b Mal. i. 7.

c "The altar of incense was before the veil of the holy of holies, where was the Divine presence over the ark." — *Wordsworth.*

d *Percy Anec.*

a "The sense would be plainer if we read—'The figures of palm trees were carved upon that wainscot;' described in *v.* 25."—*Lowth.*

Socrates called beauty a short-lived tyranny; Plato, privilege of nature; Theophrastus, a silent cheat; Theocritus, a delightful prejudice; Caradles, a solitary kingdom; Domitian said that nothing was more grateful; Aristotle affirmed that beauty was better than all the letters of recommendation in the world; Homer, that 'twas a glorious gift of nature; and Ovid calls it a favour bestowed by the gods.

"Oh, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem, by that sweet ornament which truth doth give! The rose is fair, but fairer we it deem, for that sweet odour wh. doth in it live." —*Shakespeare.*

encumbered with quaint tobacco jars, in which terriers' heads, and even the feminine form, were profaned into receptacles for the maligned weed. There was, against a wall, a noble stag's head, but on its branches hung a travelling cap, a shot flask, a Highland dirk, and other disfigurements, that made it resemble a stern Christmas tree. A Gothic bookcase was not ill-furnished, but between a *Lucretius* of 1511 and the *Pickwick Papers* was a cigar cabinet; and the last volume of *Boswell* would have fallen as flat as Jemmy himself did on the pavement of that assize town where he got so terribly tipsy, but that a pair of fencing-gloves buttressed the book, and made you look round for foils and masks. These you sought not in vain, for they were set as an appropriate halo around a bracket, from which, and from the sea, rose Venus Anadyomene.[b]

b Shirley Brooks.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SECOND.

1—4. (1) utter, or outer. This would be the priests' court; some prefer to regard these chambers as connected with the separate building, ch. xli. 12, and so in the outer court of the people. chamber, better, block of chambers.[a] (2) before, *etc.*, better, "unto the place whose length was," etc. (3) gallery, or row of chambers. (4) walk, or cloister, dividing the building into two sets of rooms, one half of wh. looked into the outer court, the other into the inner.

Cloisters of an abbey.—

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale.
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof;
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light:
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced choir below
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.[b]

a "There were two equal clusters of chambers on the north and south of the *Gizrah*, or separate place. These two clusters of chambers were one hundred cubits from east to west, and fifty cubits fr. north to south, and they had three stories."—*Wordsworth.*

b Milton.

5—9. (5) shorter, or shortened.[a] were higher, or "did abate of these." (6) not pillars, "the two upper stories had balconies standing out of them, the breadth of which was taken out of the rooms themselves, and made them so much narrower, bec. the weight of the balconies was not supported by pillars, as the rooms over the cloisters of the outward court were, but only by the wall."[b] (7) wall, or fence. (8) length, from N. to S. (9) entry, or passage into the court.

Infidelity and the Bible.—An honest peasant surprised an infidel the other day, who was jeering him for believing the Bible, by the reply. "We country people like to have two strings to our bow." "What do you mean?" inquired the infidel. "Only this," rejoined the poor man, "that believing the Bible, and acting up to it, is like having two strings to one's bow; for if it is not true, I shall be a better man for living according to it, and so it will be for my good in this life,—that is one string to my bow; and if it should be true, it will be better for me in

a "The building rose in terraces, as was usual in Bab. architecture, and so each of the two upper stories receded from the one below it."—*Spk. Com.*

b L. Amv. "The Bible, without a spiritual life to interpret it, is like a trellis on which no vine grows—bare, angular, and in the way. The Bible, with a spiritual life, is like a trellis covered with a luxuriant vine — beautiful,

the next life,—that is another string, and a pretty strong one it is. But, sir, if you do not believe the Bible, and on that account do not live as it requires, you have not one string to your bow. And oh! sir, if its tremendous threatenings prove true, oh! think what then will become of you!" [c]

10—12. (10) chambers, *etc.*, better read, "breadthwise was the wall toward the east." [a] (11) way before them, appearance to one looking at them from the front. (12) towards the south, this and prev. *v.* prob. describe the corresponding set of chambers on the south side of the *Gizrah*, or building behind the temple.

The Bible.—As in Beethoven's matchless music there runs one idea, worked out through all the changes of measure and of key, now almost hidden, now breaking out in rich, natural melody, whispered in the treble, murmured in the bass, dimly suggested in the prelude, but growing clearer and clearer as the work proceeds, winding gradually back until it ends in the key in which it began, and closes in triumphant harmony; so throughout the whole Bible there runs one great idea: man's ruin by sin, and his redemption by grace: in a word, Jesus Christ, the Saviour. This runs through the Old Testament, that prelude to the New, dimly promised at the fall, and more clearly to Abraham; typified in the ceremonies of the law; all the events of sacred history paving the way for His coming; His descent proved in the genealogies of Ruth and Chronicles; spoken of as Shiloh by Jacob, as the Star by Balaam, as the Prophet by Moses: the David of the Psalms; the Redeemer looked for by Job; the Beloved of the Song of Songs. We find Him in the sublime strains of the lofty Isaiah; in the writings of the tender Jeremiah; in the mysteries of the contemplative Ezekiel; in the visions of the beloved Daniel; the great idea growing clearer and clearer as the time drew on. Then the full harmony broke out in the song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, goodwill towards men." And Evangelists and Apostles taking up the theme, the strain closes in the same key in which it began: the devil, who troubled the first paradise, for ever excluded from the second; man restored to the favour of God; and Jesus Christ the keynote of the whole. [b]

13—16. (13) eat, *etc.*, Le. x. 13. (14) there, *i.e.* in these appointed places, within the specially holy precincts. [a] (15) gate .. east, *i.e.* the eastern gate of the outer court. (16) measuring reed, whose length is given in ch. xli. 8.

Partiality for parts of the Bible.—There are men who go through the Bible, taking out its promises—its joyous, hopeful, cheering, comforting passages, and elect these things to themselves. They do not see that there is any controversy or conflict, simply because they do not consider the other side at all. They let it alone. As the disciples, when they walked through the fields eating corn, rubbed the ears in their hands to get rid of the chaff, so there are a great many people who take the Scripture, and rub it in their hands, and cut out the part that they like, and throw the rest away. Therefore there are many persons who talk about religion as being a life of supreme and continuing joy, and for ever appeal to persons to become

odorous, and heavy with purple clusters shining through the leaves."—*Beecher.*
c *Caughey.*

a Comp. Eze. xli. 12.

"Now, the Bible is my book. I own it, from Genesis to Revelation. And it owns me. I have a right to sit down in the sanctuary of my conscience, and under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, and read that Bible. And if I will take the consequences of my own faith, I have a right to that creed which my understanding gives me, without asking you or anybody else on the face of the globe what I may believe."—*Beecher.* It is the faithful mirror of God's holy perfections, and of man's miserable failings; the more you look into it, the more you will grow like God, and be changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of our God.
b *H. W. Beecher.*

a Le. xvi. 23.

"What a pin is when the diamond has dropped from its setting, that is the Bible when its emotive truths have been taken away."—*Beecher.*

"Men's graces must get the better of their faults as a farmer's crops do of the weeds,—by

g r o w t h."—*Beecher.*

b Beecher.

Christians because it is so joyful. Well, it is joyful—in spots.[b]

17—20. (17, 18) round about, *i.e.* including the precincts. (19, 20) profane place,[a] *i.e.* Jerusalem itself only called *profane*, as not being specially consecrated.[b]

The Bible to be learned by the heart.—Bring down from the dusty garret an old file of papers, and while the venerable old dame sits near the fire, almost unconscious of passing things, read there the simple names of two that long years ago were married. They are nothing at all to the antiquarian reader, a stranger, seeking more lore; but how much thay are to the aged one, who feels as if resurrection had dawned upon her mind, and before whom all the long past rises up, brighter and clearer the further it goes back towards childhood! For a moment she sees all this in the reading of those words, and but for a moment; then they sink again under the ashes, and go out. Even thus it is with the passages of God's Word. On the surface they are smooth and simple; but if your heart knows how to plumb them, great depths, and often unsearchable, there are in them. But as the Bible is but a record of life, and as it addresses itself to life again, so, for its comprehension, there must have been life-experience. Dictionaries and grammars are like keys to a house. A key can unlock the outward door, but cannot introduce you to the people that live there, nor tell you what they are. And so, though dictionaries and grammars, and exegetical and hermeneutical helps can introduce you into the books of the Bible, your own heart must be your teacher after that, or you will have none. If you have no depths, no wants, no joys, no sorrows, with which to read, and through which to understand, then you cannot interpret this world-book. For the Bible is the heart-book of the world. Only the heart can ever tell its secret meanings; for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."[c]

a Here meaning, devoted to only common uses.

b "The lowness of the wall renders it unfit for the purpose of defence. But its square form is the emblem of the kingdom that c a n n o t be shaken, resting on Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone."—*Fausset.*

"What a babe's clothes are when the babe has slipped out of them into death, and the mother's arms clasp only raiment, would be the Bible if the Babe of Bethlehem and the truths of deep-heartedness that clothed His life should slip out of it."—*Beecher.*

c Beecher.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-THIRD.

1—6. (1) gate . . east, the eastern gate of the priests' court. (2) glory, *etc.*, the visible token of God's coming to dwell in this new temple. See for His forsaking the temple, ch. x. 19, xi. 23. voice . . waters, *see* Re. i. 15.[a] (3) vision, ch. i. 3, iii. 23. to destroy, *i.e.* to prophesy the destruction of. (4) came . . house, returning to His place in the holy of holies. (5) filled the house, *comp.* Ex. xl. 34, 35; 1 Ki. viii. 10, 11. (6) the man, who had been giving Ezekiel the measurements.

Fulness of the Bible.—The Bible is a sea, having its deep senses, the fulness of prophetic mystery into which many rivers have run. But there are, besides this, sweet and clear rivers, fresh springs, that yield water unto eternal life; good words, a honeycomb, acceptable sentences, which may refresh the mind of the hearers with spiritual drink, and delight them with the sweetness of moral precepts. Various, therefore, are the streams of the Bible. Thou hast what thou mayest drink first, what thou mayest drink second, and what thou mayest drink last.[b]

a "The noise of purling streams is grateful, of a r o a r i n g s e a dreadful."—*Mat. Henry.*

"Nor is there in the Word of God, from beginning to end, any direct instruction on the subject of art. Art must be evolved according to its own laws, and in the best way that the human mind can find out."—*Beecher.*

b Ambrose.

7—9. (7) he said, this was the voice the Prophet heard from the Glory. the place, better, "this is the place." throne . .

a "Their kings advanced to greater degrees

feet, *comp.* Is. lxvi. 1, 2. defile, by yielding to idolatries, and bringing into it idolatrous rites. in places, omit *in*, and read, "the dead bodies of their kings, their high places," etc. (8) their thresholds, *i.e.* those of altars to their vain and corrupt idols.[a] (9) carcases, by this severe word the idols are referred to, as being without life and motion, and loathsome to God.

Writers of the Bible.—Although good men wrote the Bible, our faith in the Bible does not rest on the goodness of the men who wrote it. The fatal facility with which men glide into the worship of men may suggest another reason why some of the channels chosen for conveying the mind of God were marred by glaring deficiencies. Among many earthen vessels, in various measures purged of their filthiness, may not the Divine Administrator in wisdom select for actual use some of the least pure, in order by that grosser argument to force into grosser minds the conviction that the excellency of the power is all of God?—if no stain of sin could be traced on their character, no error noted in their life, it is certain that the Bible would not have served all the purposes which it now serves among men. It would have been God-like, indeed, in matter and in mould, but it would not have reached down to the low estate of man—it would not have penetrated to the sores of a human heart. For engraving the life lessons of His Word, our Father uses only diamonds; but in every diamond there is a flaw, in some a greater and in some a less.[b]

10—12. (10) measure the pattern, so as to prove their returning obedience by exactly carrying out the directions given. (11) write it, so that they may carefully study it. (12) whole limit, all embraced within the enclosing walls, and even the mountain itself.[a]

The temple of the future (*v.* 10).—This vision illustrates for us—I. The characteristics of the kingdom of God; it is sacred, it is conspicuous, it is vast, it is complete, it is sacrificial, it is beautiful, it is God-inhabited. II. The qualification for having to do with this kingdom.[b]

13—17. (13) cubit, *see* ch. xl. 5. higher place, or back. The edge was arranged to keep the blood from running on to the pavement. It formed a kind of shooting and led into a drain. (14) settle, or stage. "The narrowings, or in-benchings, of the altar are here called *settles*." (15) four horns, Ex. xxvii. 2.[a] (16) square, we should call it a cube: see Ex. xxvii. 1; Re. xxi. 16. (17) settle, the lower one. stairs, or steps.

Variety in the Bible.—Whether we look at the Old or New Testament, the same richness and variety of form reveal themselves, until it may truly be said, that out of the ground of this paradise also the Lord God has made "to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food;" all that the earth has fairest appearing here in fairer and more perfect form—the fable, only here transformed into the parable—the ode transfigured into the psalm—oracles into prophecies—histories of this world into histories of the kingdom of heaven. Nor is tragedy wanting, though for Œdipus we have the man of Uz; nor epos, though for "the tale of Troy divine," ours is the story of the New Jerusalem, "coming down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband." I would willingly show how this also was need-

of idolatry, in setting up altars and images for their idols in the temple itself and the courts before it."—*Lowth.*

2 Ki. xvi. 14, xxi. 4, 5, 7; Eze. v. 11, viii. 6, 15.

In 1632 Baker and Lucas published an edition termed since "The wicked Bible," because the little word *not* was omitted in the seventh commandment. The printers were heavily fined by the High Commission, and the whole edition destroyed.

b Dr. Arnot.

a Is. ii. 2, 3; Mi. iv. 1, 2.

v. 10. *Bp. Wilson*, i. 155; *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kgs.* 464.

v. 12. *R. Erskine*, v. 284.

b U. R. Thomas.

a "The altar regarded as to its height is called *Har-El*, the Mount of God; and in its area, or upper surface, is called *Ariel*, the lion of God, or as some render it, the *hearth of God*, as consuming the sacrifices."—*Wordsworth.*

"Lady Jane Grey was once asked, in a tone of surprise, how she could consent to forego the pleasures of the chase, which her parents ever enjoyed, and prefer

sitting at home, reading the Bible. She smilingly replied—'All amusements of that description are but a shadow of the pleasures which I enjoy in reading this book.'" —*W. Nicholson.*
b Trench.

a Ex. xxix. 36; Eze. xlv. 18, 19.

b Le. iv. 12; He. xiii. 11.

c Le. iv. 27, 28, 30.

"The truths of the Bible are like gold in the soil. Whole generations walk over it, and know not what treasures are hidden beneath. So centuries of men pass over the Scriptures, and know not what riches lie under the feet of their interpretation. Sometimes, when they discover them, they call them new truths. One might as well call gold, newly dug, new gold." — *H. W. Beecher.*

d Chardin.

a "In the second temple no sacrifice was complete without the use of salt, and the Rabbis tell us that there was a great heap of salt close to the altar, always ready for use, and that the inclined

ful, if the book whereof we are speaking should indeed leaven the world, should offer nutriment, not merely for some men, but for all men; and, far from all tyrannous lopping of all to one and the same length, should encourage in every man the free development of whatever had been given him of God. Thus it must needs have been, if the Spirit by this Word was to sanctify all in every man which was capable of being sanctified: all which, coming originally from God, could be redeemed from the defilement of this world, and in purer shape be again restored unto Him.[b]

18—22. (18, 19) young bullock, Le. viii. 14.[a] (20) four horns, *v.* 15. (21) appointed place, *comp.* Ex. xxix. 14.[b] (22) cleanse, by sprinkling the blood.[c]

Thresholds.—"The Hindoos have a very solemn oath connected with the threshold of the temple. If a man is accused of any great crime, he goes to the temple, makes his prostrations, and then approaches the threshold; he pauses, then steps over it, declaring, at the same time, that he is not guilty of the crime laid to his charge. It is therefore very common to ask a person who denies anything he is suspected to have done, 'Will you step over the threshold of the temple?' The Lord, in His severe denunciations, by the Prophet Zephaniah, against the Jews for their idolatry, says, 'In the same day also will I punish all those who leap on the threshold;' from which it appears that they also used thus to take an oath, or to perform some other heathenish ceremonies. But the threshold is also sacred in private houses: it is not propitious for a person to remain on it, neither to eat, sneeze, yawn, nor spit whilst there. Should they do so, the people in the house will throw water upon them to prevent the evil. I must not forget to notice the pointed observations of the Prophet Ezekiel on the same subject. He beheld that 'the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house.' In the preceding chapter the Prophet gives a fearful description of the idolatry of Israel, and that the glory of the Lord had gone from the cherub, in contempt of their idolatry; or to indicate its nature, shows that he is gone to the threshold, and is about to depart from them. When the glory of God was about to return to the temple, the sin of Israel hindered it, and the Prophet exhorted them to repentance, and the Lord reproved them for 'setting their thresholds by His threshold.' 'They have even defiled My holy name by their abominations.' At length the judgments of the Lord were denounced against Moab, Ammon, and Assyria; for the Prophet Zephaniah says, 'Nettles and saltpits' shall be amongst them; that Nineveh shall be like a wilderness, that flocks shall be in the midst of her, and that 'desolation shall be in the thresholds.'"[d]

23—27. (23) ram, *comp.* Ex. xxix. 31; Le. viii. 22. (24) cast salt, Le. ii. 13; Mk. ix. 49.[a] (25) seven days, the same sacrifices were to be offered on each of these days, except that a bullock was offered on the first day. (26) consecrate themselves, according to Mosaic regulations. (27) peace offerings, or thank offerings.[b] Mal. i. 11. accept you, ch. xx. 40, 41; Ro. xii. 1; 1 Pe. ii. 5.

Thresholds.—Among the Tartars they never walk on the threshold of princes, out of respect to them (Bergeron, *Voyage de*

Calpin, cap. 10). The caliphs of Bagdad obliged all who entered their palaces to prostrate themselves on the threshold, whereon they set a piece of the black stone of the temple of Mecca, to render it more venerable (D'Herbelot). "On entering the first large hall we were stopped by a silver grating, where we were obliged to take off our shoes; and here we remarked the veneration of the Persians for the threshold of a holy place, a feeling that they preserve in some degree even for the threshold of their houses. Before they ventured to cross it, they knelt down and kissed it, whilst they were very careful not to touch it with their feet. In writing to a prince, or a great personage, it is common for them to say, Let me make the dust of your threshold into *surmeh* (collyrium) for my eyes" (Morier's *Second Journey through Persia*). In a chapel adjoining to that in which a saint lies, in which one of the late kings of that country has a superb tomb, and is supposed to lie interred, are seven sacred songs written in large letters of gold, on a blue ground, in so many distinct panels, in honour of Aaly, Mohammed's son-in-law, and the great saint of the Persians, as also the ancestor of that female saint that lies entombed there. Among other extravagant expressions of praise there is this distich in the fourth hymn:—"The angelic messenger of the truth, Gabriel, kisses every day the threshold of thy gate, because it is the only way to arrive at the throne of Mohammed."

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FOURTH.

1—3. (1) **outward sanctuary**, or court of the priests. "Only a prince of the house of David might sit down in the priests' court." (2) **shall be shut**, *i.e.* usually shut, and only opened for one person, and on special occasions for him.[a] **Lord . . entered**, by the symbol of His presence passing in that way.[b] (3) **the prince**, ch. xxxiv. 24. The head of the nation regarded as the vicegerent and earthly representative of God. **eat bread**, a custom connected with sacrifices.[c] "A religious feast made of the remainder of a sacrifice."

Removal of graces.—When the king removes his court, nothing is left behind but bare walls and rubbish. So, if God removes from a man's heart, wherein He has kept His court, His graces will not stay behind. Then farewell, peace; farewell, comfort: nothing is left behind but confusion and disorder.—*Shutting the gate through which the king has entered.*—Caron, in his *Account of Japan*, tells us that whenever any of the chief nobles builds a new palace, he causes an entrance to be made for common use, and also one which is more elegant, adorned with carvings from top to bottom, varnished and gilt. This is covered over with planks, in order that it may not be damaged either by the sun or by the rain; and it remains thus covered till the emperor goes to feast in the new-built palace. As soon as he has passed in and out of it, it is again shut and covered up, nor is it either opened or uncovered again, except upon a like occasion, because no one may enjoy the honour of treading on the same threshold with the emperor; whilst at the same time it would be considered as derogatory to his majesty to

plane to the altar was kept covered with salt."—*Edersheim.*

b "Under the guidance of the Epistle to the Hebrews we cannot fail to recognise in this vision the symbol of the purification of the Church of God by the cleansing blood of Christ, Victim and Priest, Heb. viii., ix., x."—*Spk. Com.*

"They are called in the margin *thank-offerings*, &c. they were offerings of thanksgivings for mercies received."—*Lowth.*

a "In Persia, when a nobleman builds a palace, he invariably has a gate erected expressly for the king, whom he invites to a banquet at the opening of his palace. When the king departs, the gate is walled up, and no one is ever allowed to pass through it afterwards, unless the king should again visit the owner. Sir R. Porter gives an instance of a gate at Bagdad, by which the Sultan Murad had entered into the city after his victory over the Persians, being bricked up, and kept so, as he saw it."—*Gadsby.* *Caron* says a similar custom prevails in Japan.

b Ezc. xliii. 2.

pass over one that had been worn. In the words of the text, "This gate shall be shut. It is for the prince."

4—8. (4) north gate, ch. xl. 20. glory, *etc.*, comp. 1 Ki. viii. 10, 11. (5) entering . . going forth, these were carefully arranged so as to secure that nothing profane or idolatrous should be admitted within the temple precincts. (6) let it suffice,[a] let the past suffice; don't repeat it any more. (7) strangers, here meaning unauthorised priests.[b] my bread, the fat and the blood were regarded as peculiarly appropriated to God.[c] (8) charge, Le. viii. 35. for yourselves, *i.e.* at your own pleasure, not according to the revealed will and law.[d]

The open gate.—Among other instances of the extreme distance and profound awe with which Eastern majesty is treated, one that is mentioned by Sir John Chardin, in his account of Persia, appears very strange to us, yet may afford a lively comment on a passage of the Prophet Ezekiel. Sir John tells us, "It is a common custom in Persia, that when a great man has built a palace, he treats the king and his grandees in it for several days. Then the great gate of it is open; but when these festivities are over, they shut it up, never more to be opened." He adds, "I have heard that the same thing is practised in Japan." It seems surprising to us that great and magnificent houses within should have only small entrances into them, which no one would suppose would lead into such beautiful edifices: but such, he observes, is the common custom there; making no magnificent entrance into their houses at all; or, if they do, shutting them up after a little time, and making use of some small entrance near the great one, or, it may be, in some very different part of the building.[e]

9—14. (9) stranger, *etc.*, of the sons of the stranger. Comp. Nu. xvi. 9, 39, 40. (10) gone . . me, 2 Chr. xxxvi. 14. Individuals among the Levites had proved unfaithful. bear their iniquity, *i.e.* the due consequence of their iniquity. (11) ministers, or attendants at the gates; porters. slay, *etc.*, this was the work of Levites.[a] The Levites mentioned were to minister to the proper Levites.[b] (12) caused, better, were an occasion to; they led the people by their bad example. (13) near, so as to be in actual contact with the holy things. (14) keepers, *i.e.* doorkeepers and attendants.[c]

Superiority of the Bible.—This book is the mirror of the Divinity—the rightful regent of the world. Other books are planets shining with reflected lustre; this book, like the sun, shines with ancient and unborrowed ray. Other books have, to their loftiest altitudes, sprung from earth: this book looks down from heaven high. Other books appeal to understanding or fancy; this book to conscience and faith. Other books solicit our attention, this demands it—it speaks with authority, and not as the scribes. Other books guide gracefully along the earth, or onwards to the mountain summits of the ideal: this, and this alone, conducts up the awful abyss which leads to heaven. Other books, after shining their season, may perish in flames fiercer than those which consumed the Alexandrian library; this, in essence, must remain pure as gold, and unconsumable as asbestos, amidst the flames of general conflagration. Other books may be forgotten in the universe where suns go down and

c Ge. xxxi. 54; Ex. xviii. 12, xxiv. 11; 1 Co. x. 18.

a De. iii. 26; 1 Pe. iv. 3.

b *Spk. Com.*

c Le. iii. 16, xvii. 11.

d "Or, 'Ye have not *yourselves* kept the charge of My holy things, but have set others as keepers of My charge in My sanctuary for yourselves.'" —*Maurer.*

"The more diligently I pursue my search into these oracles of eternal truth, the Scriptures, I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever-increasing fund of spiritual treasures."—*Hervey.*

e *Harmer.*

a 2 Chr. xxxv. 11.

b Very few Levites returned from the captivity. See Ezra ii. 40—42; Neh. vii. 43—45; comp. Ezr. ii. 36—39, and viii. 15, 18, 19.

"The gap in the number of Levites was filled up by 220 Nethinim (given ones), prob. original strangers and captives, who were held by the Jews in lowest repute." — *Edersheim.*

c "To perform the servile offices belonging to My temple and worship."—*Lowth.*

disappear like bubbles in the stream; this book, transferred to a higher clime, shall shine as the brightness of that eternal firmament, and as those higher stars, which are for ever and ever.[d]

15—19. (15) sons of Zadok, ch. xl. 46. xliii. 19. fat and the blood, *v.* 7. (16) sanctuary, the first chamber, known as the holy place. table, or altar. (17) linen garments,[a] including the linen breeches, the coat, the girdle, and the bonnet. no wool, regarded as unclean,[b] *v.* 18. (18) bonnets, or caps. (19) utter court, or outer court of the people. with their garments, *i.e.* while having on their special priestly garments.

The use of a Bible.—It was customary in Cromwell's time for his soldiers to carry each a Bible in his pocket. Among others, a profligate young man was ordered to attack some fortress. During the engagement a bullet had perforated his Bible, and gone so far as to rest opposite these words in Ecclesiastes: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." The words, so appropriate to his case, powerfully affected his mind, and proved by the blessing of God the means of his conversion. He used to observe that the Bible had been the happy means of saving both his soul and body.[c]

20—25. (20) shave, *etc.*,[a] Le. xxi. 5. grow long,[b] wh. was an ordinary sign of mourning. poll,[c] cut and trim. (21) drink wine, Le. x. 9. The prohibition refers to times when the priests were actually engaged in holy service. (22) widow, Le. xxi. 13. The Levitical law for the high priest is extended to all priests. (23) teach, *etc.*, Le. x. 10, xi.—xvi.; Mal. ii. 7. (24) controversy, *i.e.* when controversies or disputes arise among the people. (25) dead person, Le. xxi. 1, 11.

The duty of ministers (*v.* 23).—God's ministers are to be public instructors. 1. They are to teach; 2. Their instructions to be specially addressed to Israel, "My people;" 3. Their instructions to have defined purpose, to show "the difference," etc.; 4. Their method of instruction to be twofold, by example and by precept.

26—31. (26) cleansed, fr. the defilement ensuing in relation to a dead body, Nu. xix. 11. (27) his sin offering, Le. iv. 3. (28) it shall be, render *v.* "This shall be to them for an inheritance, that I am their inheritance." (29) eat, *etc.*, for their necessary support. dedicated, or devoted thing. Le. xxvii. 21, 28. (30) first, chief, or best. oblation, or offering; gift from the produce of the ground. dough, made from the new corn. Nu. xv. 20. (31) dead of itself,[a] Ex. xxii. 31; Le. xxii. 8.

Infidels and the Bible.—No matter how infidel philosophers may regard the Bible: they may say that Genesis is awry, and that the Psalms are more than half-bitter imprecations, and the prophecies only the fantasies of brain-bewildered men, and the Gospels weak laudations of an impostor, and the Epistles only the letters of a mad Jew, and that the whole book has had its day; I

d G. Gilfillan.

a "The material of wh. the four vestments of the ordinary priests were made was 'linen,' or more accurately, 'byssus,' the white shining cotton stuff of Egypt. These two qualities of the byssus are specially marked as characteristic, and on them part of the symbolic meaning depended."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Wool soon induces perspiration in the sultry E., and so becomes uncleanly."—*Fausset.*

c J. Evans.

a "Jerome supposes that the Jewish priests were forbidden to shave their heads, thereby to distinguish them fr. several of the heathen priests, particularly the Eg. priests of Isis and Serapis, who had their heads shaved and uncovered."—*Lowth.*

b "Long hair was a sign of effeminacy. 1 Cor. xi. 14."—*Wordsworth.*

c 2 Sa. xiv. 26.

a "The Mohammedans are forbidden to eat that wh. dieth of itself, and blood, and swine's flesh, and that on wh. the name of any besides God hath been invoked; and that which hath been strangled, or killed by a blow or a fall, or by the horns of another beast; and that which

hath been torn by a wild beast, except what he himself shall kill; and that which hath been sacrificed unto idols!" —*Gadsby.*

b H. W. Beecher.

shall cling to it until they show me a better revelation. The Bible emptied, effete, worn-out! If all the wisest men of the world were placed man to man, they could not sound the shallowest depth of the Gospel of John. O philosophers! break the shell, and fly out and let me hear how you can sing. Not of passion, I know that already; not of worldly power, I hear that everywhere; but teach me, through your song, how to find joy in sorrow, strength in weakness, and light in darkest days; how to bear buffeting and scorn, how to welcome death, and to pass through its ministration into the sphere of life; and this, not for me only, but for the whole world that groans and travails in pain; and until you can do this, speak not to me of a better revelation.[b]

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIFTH.

1—5. (1) by lot, or allotment, apportionment. Reference here is to the portion assigned to Jehovah, and used for His sanctuary, priests, and Levites. oblation, Heb., *heave-offering.*[a] reeds, this word is supplied by the translators, prob. correctly. The reed was twelve feet long. The whole was a square of sixty miles on each side.[b] (2) sanctuary, including the entire temple-area. suburbs, void places; ground immediately about the temple-walls, wh. might not be built on. (3) this measure, *v.* 1. (4) for the priests, for their work, dwellings, and maintenance. (5) twenty chambers, LXX. trans. better, "for cities to dwell in."[c]

a "So called bec. when anything was offered to God, the offerer raised the hand." —*Fausset.*

Ex. xxv. 2, xxix. 24, 27.

b "This quantity of land could not be simply for dwellings, and was prob. in lieu of tithes, just as the prince had his definite portion of land instead of being supported by the contributions of the people."—*Spk. Com.*

c Nu. xxxv. 2.

d Maclagan.

The Bible a miracle.—The Bible itself is a standing and an astonishing miracle. Written fragment by fragment, throughout the course of fifteen centuries, under different states of society, and in different languages, by persons of the most opposite tempers, talents, and conditions, learned and unlearned, prince and peasant, bond and free; cast into every form of instructive composition and good writing, history, prophecy, poetry, allegory, emblematical representation, judicious interpretation, literal statement, precept, example, proverb, disquisition, epistle, sermon, prayer; in short, all rational shapes of human discourse, and treating, moreover, of subjects not obvious, but most difficult. Its authors are not found, like other writers, contradicting one another upon the most ordinary matters of fact and opinion, but are at harmony upon the whole of their sublime and momentous scheme.[d]

6—8. (6) possession . . city, or the portion to be occupied by the city. for the whole house, *i.e.* it was to be regarded as belonging to the nation, and free for the use of the entire people. (7) for the prince, for his palace and private estate.[a] His portion is thus carefully defined to prevent future encroachments, such as there had been in the past.[b] (8) oppress, by seizing on private property.

a "On either side of the 25,000 reeds a strip of land, running westwards to the sea, eastwards to the Jordan, formed the possession of the prince."—*Spk. Com.*

b 1 Sa. viii. 14, etc.; 2 Ki. xxiii. 35; Je. xxii.

A proud Indian nabob, going along the streets one day, was at-

Supposed loss of the Bible.—It was very early suggested that the whole Bible had again and again been quoted piecemeal in one book or other—that it had impressed its own image on the surface of human literature, and had been reflected on its course as the stars on a stream. But alas! when lost, on investigation it was found as vain to expect that the gleam of starlight

would still remain mirrored in the water when the clouds had veiled the stars themselves, as that the bright characters of the Bible would remain reflected in the books of men when they had been erased from the book of God. On inspection, it was found that every text, every phrase which had been quoted, not only in books of devotion and theology, but in tho e of poetry and fiction, had been remorselessly expunged. Never before had I had any adequate idea of the extent to which the Bible had moulded the intellectual and moral life of the last eighteen centuries, nor how intimately it had interfused itself with habits of thought and modes of expression; nor how naturally and extensively its comprehensive imagery and language had been introduced into human writings, and most of all where there had been most of genius. A vast portion of literature became instantly worthless, and was transformed into so much waste-paper. It was almost impossible to look into any book of merit, and read ten pages together, witout coming to some provoking erasures and mutilations, some *hiatus valde deflendi*, which made whole passages perfectly unintelligible. Many of the sweetest passages of Shakespeare were converted into unmeaning nonsense, from the absence of those words which his own all but divine genius had appropriated from a still diviner source. As to Milton, he was nearly ruined, as might naturally be supposed. Walter Scott's novels were filled with perpetual *lacunæ*. I hoped it might be otherwise with the philosophers, and so it was: but even here it was curious to see what strange ravages the visitation had wrought. Some of the most beautiful and comprehensive of Bacon's aphorisms were reduced to enigmatical nonsense.[c]

tracted by the sounds proceeding from a mission-school, and he drew near to listen. The boys were reading the fifth chapter of Matthew. The eyes of the prince flashed with unwonted fire; and when they had finished their lesson, he exclaimed, "Well, if you only live that chapter as well as you read it, I will never say another word against Christianity."

During the persecution of the Nonconformists, in the reign of James II., one of them copied out the whole Bible in shorthand for his own use, fearing the re-establishment of popery, and the suppression of the Holy Scriptures.

c H. Rogers.

9—12. (9) suffice, ch. xliv. 8. exactions,[a] marg. *expulsions*, lit. *ejections*. such as Ahab's, 1 Ki. xxi. 19. (10) just . . bath, Le. xix. 35, 36; Pr. xi. 1. (11) bath, a measure for fluids.[b] homer, distinguish from *omer*, Ex. xvi. 36. (12) gerahs, Ex. xxx. 13. maneh, or pound.[c]

The duty of the civil rulers (*v.* 9).—1. They were to impose a check to passion, revenge, and wrong-doing: 2. To execute law and justice without respect to persons; 3. To abolish needless, and reduce necessary, taxation; 4. To institute uniform weights, measures, and coinage: 5. To do their personal share in the matter of religious offerings.

a "Your evictions of My people."—*Wordsworth.*

b 1 Ki. vii. 26, 38; 2 Chr. ii. 10, iv. 5; Is. v. 10.

c 1 Ki. x. 17; Ezr. ii. 69; Ne. vii. 71.

13—17. (13) oblation, *v.* 1. (14) cor, prob. a synonym for homer.[a] (15) lamb, or kid. peace offerings, or thank-offerings. (15) for the prince, better, with the prince.[b] (17) prince's part, his special duty as the prince. prepare, *i.e.* provide.

The Christian's bulwark—The Bible.—The Christian faith has been, and is still, very fiercely and obstinately attacked. How many efforts have been and are still made; how many books, serious or frivolous, able or silly, have been and are spread incessantly, in order to destroy it in men's minds! Where has this redoubtable struggle been supported with the greatest energy and success? and where has Christian faith been best defended? There where the reading of the Sacred Book is a general and assiduous part of public worship, there where it takes place in the interior of families, and in solitary meditation. It is the Bible,

a 1 Ki. v. 11; 2 Chr. ii. 10, xxvii. 5.

b "The prince shall join with the people in making these oblations, whereas those that follow, in the next *v.*, are to be at the sole charge of the prince."—*Lowth.*

the Bible itself, which combats and triumphs most efficaciously in the war between incredulity and belief.

18—21. (18) first month,[a] *see* Le. xvi. 16. (19) upon the posts, *etc.*, comp. ch. xliii. 20. (20) simple, or errs through ignorance. (21) passover, Ex. xii., etc.

The Bible.—You find the Bible the patriot's charter-book, the child's delight, the old man's comfort, and the young man's guide. In its pages the sick and weary find the solace which they need, and the tempted meet with timely succour. Its words whisper hope and peace to the dying, and minister daily food to the healthy and vigorous household. With the pious music of its sublime or plaintive songs echo the roofs of ten thousand times ten thousand Christian temples, and the child's prayer, night and morn, is lisped forth in the simple and comprehensive words which were dictated by Him who is its central light.[b]

22—25. (22) prepare, or provide. (23) seven, *etc.*, comp. Nu. xxviii. 19—24. (24) meat offering, *etc.*, *vv.* 11, 15. hin, sixth part of an ephah or bath. (25) feast . . days, Nu. xxix. 12.

Influence of the Bible.—The Bible has been expelled for centuries, by atheistic or sacerdotal hate, from the dwellings of many of the European nations. As a matter of course, the domestic virtues have declined; the conjugal relation is disparaged; deception and intrigue have supplanted mutual confidence; and society has become diseased to its very core. The very best thing we can do—the only thing which will be efficient to arrest these evils, is to restore to those nations the Word of God; to replace in their houses that Bible of which they have been robbed. Only do for France and Italy, Belgium and Spain, Portugal and Austria, what has been attempted, and to a great extent accomplished, for our country—put a Bible in every family, and a mightier change will pass over Europe than can be effected by all the diplomacy of her statesmen, or all the revolutions projected by her patriots.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SIXTH.

1—4. (1) gate, *etc.*, ch. xliv. 2, 3. (2) worship . . gate,[a] *comp.* Sol.'s position at the dedication, 2 Chr. vi. 12, 13.[b] (3) people . . land, standing behind their prince, and represented by him. (4) burnt offering, *comp.* Nu. xxviii. 9.

Religious decision.—Consider—I. The importance of religious decision. Important because thus only can—1. The harmonious operation of all the powers of the soul be secured: 2. Every difficulty be successfully overcome: 3. We obtain the full approbation of God. II. The philosophy of religious decision. To serve the Lord demands the action of the will. 1. The will is the controlling faculty of the soul; 2. To be virtuous in its action or volition it must be free; 3. Its action is determined, to a great extent, by the influences which are brought to bear upon it. III. The urgency of religious decision. "This day," because —1. Procrastination is dangerous; 2. Your advantages will never be greater than they are now; 3. It is criminal to hesitate to do that which is so manifestly your reasonable duty. If you will not decide while it is a day of grace, you must for ever perish.[c]

a "The offerings here, and the manner of offering as to the sprinkling of the blood, etc., differ in many respects from the injunctions of the Levitical law."—*Wordsworth.*

b Dr. Beard.

"Do I cast away the Bible? No. But the Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks through his telescope, then he sees worlds beyond; but if he looks at his telescope, then he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing to be looked through to see that which is beyond; but most people only look at it; and so they see only the dead letter."—*Beecher.*

a "This worship was offered by bowing his head, and bowing down his face to the earth, or falling down upon the ground, as the posture of Dios worship is elsewhere described."—*Lowth*

b "The prince occupies an analogous position, standing in front of the porch of the eastern gate of the inner court, while the priests are sacrificing before him."—*Spk. Com.*

Heathen and Jewish worship contrasted.—We have met with a very curious engraving in the *Antiquités d'Herculanenm*, after an ancient painting found at Portici, representing the Egyptian worship of Isis. This we have copied; for while some allege that the forms of the Hebrew worship resembled, essentially, those of the Egyptians, and others contend that their forms were designedly made as different as possible from those of Egypt, it is an advantage to ascertain the truth from the unexceptionable testimony of an ancient painting.[d]

5—8. (5) able to give, *i.e.* the amount is to be settled by his own ability and willingness. (6) new moon, Nu. xxviii. 11, 15. (7) meat offering, *v.* 5. (8) that gate, *v.* 1.

Choose your God.—I. What will you live for if not for God? 1. Pleasure. And what does this promise you? Live as you like, it says; but will it last? 2. Wealth. But will your wealth make you happy? Is a miser happy? 3. Praise. Fame says, I will blow my trumpet loud over your grave. Over your grave! Will you hear it then? Will you sleep the sweeter for it? At God's bar it *may* be a heavy curse. 4. Affection: friendship. Now, this in itself is beautiful. But earthly friends must die; and then they are not perfect. No, you want something better than this. II. Why you should live for God. In Him—1. You have what nothing else can give; 2. You may have all the other portions, too, as far as they are worth having.[a]

9—15. (9) over against it, *i.e.* by the gate on the opposite side. (10) in the midst, as their representative. (11) able to give, *v.* 5. (12) voluntary, *etc.*, as an act and expression of personal piety. (13) daily, *etc.*, Ex. xxix. 38. (14) continually, a daily solemn recognition that all things they had were the Lord's. (15) prepare, or provide.

The presence of the prince (*v.* 10).—I. He is in the midst of his people: 2. His presence is apprehended by his people; 3. He is accessible to his people; 4. His presence is for practical purposes. Apply:—(1) Live as in the presence of your Prince; (2) Beware of going where you cannot expect Him to follow; (3) Be willing to follow where He leads; (4) So cherish His presence in life that when you go out of this world He may still be with you.

16—18. (16) give a gift, it could only be from his allotted portion: and to his sons, not to his servants. He must not alienate any portion from his family. (17) year of liberty, jubilee year, when property was restored.[a] (18) take .. oppression, ch. xlv. 8.

The trumpet, the law, and the crown (*v.* 17).—I. The trumpet of the year of liberty. 1. When sounded; 2. Where sounded: 3. For what purpose sounded. II. The law of the year of liberty; its duties are typical. 1. Unworldliness; 2. Entire devotion to God. III. The crown of the year of liberty. 1. It spake of the joy of the recipient of special blessings; 2. It spake also of sympathy.[b]

19—24. (19) a place, for cooking the priests' food. (20) boil, 2 Chr. xxxv. 13. bake, Le. ii. 4. 5, 7. (21) every corner a court, for cooking the flesh of the peace-offerings, of wh. the people partook along with the priests.[a] (22) joined, better, as marg., "had chimneys." (23) row of buildings, furnaces,

c P. L. Davies, M.A.

It would be a poor preparation for my first Sabbath in heaven, to have misspent my last Sabbath on earth.

d Dr. Kitto.

a Dr. J. Edmonds.

"Among all that has been published on ethical subjects, on science, on sociology, on physical economy, can you find any book that so inspires courage, and hope, and correct judgment, and love of holiness, as the Bible does?"—*Beecher.*

"The Bible will not be less, but rather more, prized by our occasionally turning from it to open another and equally divine volume, to read some pages of the Book of Nature."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

a Sons may have freehold rights, but servants only leasehold rights.

"The Jubilee year was restored after the captivity."—*Josephus.*

b Stems and Twigs.

a Fausset.

"The growth of a believer is not like a mushroom, but like an oak,

which increases slowly indeed, but surely. Many suns, showers, and frosts pass upon it before it comes to perfection; and though in winter it seems dead, it is gathering strength at the root."—*Cowper.*
b Dr. R. W. Hamilton.

etc. (24) ministers, or attendants. Distinguished from the priests.

Domestic religion.—Let us consider—I. In what domestic religion consists. 1. Piety: 2. Instruction: 3. Discipline; 4. Exemplary consistency. II. The benefits that result from it. 1. It gives a definite aim to domestic plans; 2 It secures the spirit of harmony and love: 3. It is the ordinary means of conversion to those who reside within its circle: 4. It heightens all our social enjoyments; 5. It soothes the calamities which are incident to our most intimate relations: 6. It strengthens and raises the piety of all spiritually engaged in it; 7. It establishes so many seats of holy influence and usefulness.[b]

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SEVENTH.

1—5. (1) waters, there was a fountain under the temple of Jerusalem, and this suggests the fig. here used.[a] toward the east, looking eastward. The inner sanctuary was placed toward the west. (2) on the right side, "these were the spare waters not used in the service of the temple." (3) waters . . ancles, stated as indicating their depth. (4) knees, gradually increasing in depth. (5) river, symbolical of the full gifts of the Spirit in the later days.

The vision of the holy waters (*vv.* 1—12).—I. This river in the place and character of its origin, in the gradual increase of it, and also in the healing, vitalising properties of its waters, may be regarded as a type of the gradual development of the plan of salvation. II. They may be regarded as a figure of the rise and progress of religion in the soul. III. They suggest a picture of our glorious Christianity in its origin, diffusion, and general results.

6—8. (6) seen this, taken full and careful observation of this. (7) many trees, the natural accompaniment of a fresh flowing stream. (8) desert, or plain of the Jordan. sea, the Dead Sea. healed,[a] typical of the gracious work of God's Spirit.[b]

Trees.—The laurel, firm, erect, and bold, expands its leaf of vivid green. In spite of the united, the repeated attacks of wind, and rain, and frost, it preserves an undismayed lively look: and maintains its post, while withering millions fall around. Worthy, by vanquishing the rugged force of winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant conqueror's brow. Nor must I forget the bay tree, which scorns to be a mean pensioner on a few transient sunny gleams, or, with a servile obsequiousness, to vary its appearance in conformity to the changing seasons: by such indications of sterling worth, and staunch resolution, reading a lecture to the poet's genius, while it weaves the chaplet for his temples. These, and a few other plants, clad with native verdure, retain their comely aspect in the bleakest climes and in the coldest months. Such, and so durable, are the accomplishments of a refined understanding and an amiable temper. The tawdry ornaments of dress, which catch the unthinking vulgar, soon become insipid and despicable. The rubied lip and the rosy cheek fade. Even the sparkling wit, as well as the sparkling eye, please but for a moment. But the

a "The Prophet Joel, taking occasion of the fact in nature that there was a fountain under the temple at Jerusalem, wh. carried off the blood of the sacrifices, and, carrying it off, was intermingled with that blood—the image of the All-atoning Blood—speaks of a fountain flowing forth from the house of the Lord, and watering the valley of Shittim, whither by nature its waters could not flow."—*Pusey.*
a "The waters of the sea will be sweetened by the stream flowing into them."—*Mosheh Ben Shesheth.*
"In its bituminous waters no vegetable or animal life is said to be found. But now death is to give place to life in Judæa, and throughout the world, as symbolised by the healing of those death-pervaded waters covering the doomed cities."—*Fausset.*
b "We find in it only a spiritual allegory, which foreshadows miracles of mercy

virtuous mind has charms which survive the decay of every inferior embellishment; charms which add to the fragrancy of the flower, the permanency of the evergreen. Such, likewise, is the happiness of the sincerely religious; like a tree, says the inspired moralist, 'whose leaf shall not fall.' He borrows not his peace from external circumstances, but has a fund within, and is 'satisfied from himself.' Even though impoverished by calamitous accidents, he is rich in the possession of grace, and richer in the hope of glory. His joys are infinitely superior to, as well as nobly independent of, the transitory glow of sensual delight, or the capricious favours of what the world calls fortune.[c]

9—12. (9) **shall live**, or be healthy and vigorous. **everything shall live**, or, there shall be abundance of life. (10) **fishers**, the sign of its being known as a river full of life. **En-gedi**,[a] Ge. xiv. 7. **En-eglaim**, on the E. side of Dead Sea, where the Jordan falls into it.[b] **great sea**, or Mediterranean. (11) **marishes**, or marshy places; from these salt was obtained for commerce. These will not be healed because the living stream will not reach them. (12) **fruit**, *etc.*, comp. Re. xxii. 2.

The holy waters (*v.* 9).—I. The river the text specifies. 1. The source from whence its issues: 2. The direction in which it flows: 3. The plenitude with wlfich it abounds. II. The blessings the text describes. 1. The Gospel, if healing in its virtue; 2. Is abundant in its success; 3. Is quickening in its power. III. The instructions the text suggests. 1. The duty of gratitude for Gospel blessings; 2. The necessity of embracing Gospel blessings; 3. The blessedness of enjoying Gospel salvation.

13—17. (13) **border**, or, arrangement. A new allotment of the land was necessary on the return from captivity. **two portions**, Ge. xlviii. 5; Jos. xiv. 4. (14) **one as another**, each receiving an equal portion. **lifted**, *etc.*, ch. xx. 5, 6. **fall unto you**, by Divine arrangement, so that about it you need have no disputings. (15) **Hethlon**, a place near Damascus; ch. xlviii. 1.[a] **Zedad**, Nu. xxxiv. 7, 8. (16) **Hamath**, at the foot of Mt. Hermon.[b] **Berothah**, 2 Sam. viii. 8. **Sibraim**, unknown. **Hazar-hatticon**, or the middle Hazar, to distinguish it from *Hazar-enan*. **Hauran**,[c] the district S. of Damascus. (17) **Hazar-enan**, or village of fountains.

Experimental evidence of the Bible.—My next proof consists of experimental evidence. In order to appreciate it, I would bid the objector come with me to some sequestered glen amid the hills and valleys of Scotland. I will take him to the patriarchal occupant of a lonely cabin, where you may behold the grey-headed man, amid intermingling smiles and tears, bending, morning, noon, and night, over one book—"the big ha' Bible." Let us ask him, "How do you know that that book called the Bible is the book of God? You never read the writings of a Paley. the analogy of a Butler: you never studied the credibility of Lardner, nor the eloquent demonstrations of a Chalmers; how came you to believe it?" "Come to believe it?" would the peasant say; "I have felt it in my heart and conscience to be the book of God! it has taught me the truths I never knew before, it has given me a peace the world could never give; it has calmed my beating heart, it has staunched my bleeding wounds, it has kindled

in store for the whole world far more stupendous. ... There is another desert, however, wh. He will surely heal, the desert of sin, the sea of spiritual death."—*Thomson.*

c Hervey.

a "South of Engedi the sea is contracted, by a peninsula jutting into the sea northwards, so as to give to the whole southern part of the sea the appearance, not of a broad sheet of water, but rather of a long winding bay, or the estuary of a large river when the tide is out and the shoals are left dry."—*Robinson.*

b So *Hengstenberg.*

a "Prob. the defile between the ranges of Libanus and anti-Libanus, from the sea to Hamath."—*Spk. Com.*

b 1 Ki. viii. 65; Am. vi. 2, 14.

c Auranitis.

An Irish boy being commanded by a priest to burn his Bible, reluctantly complied; but at the same time said, "I thank God that you can't take from me the twenty chapters that I have in my mind."

"The Christian graces are like perfumes, the more they are pressed by affliction the sweeter they smell; or, like the stars, they appear best in the darkness of trouble."—*J. Beaumont.*

within me the love of God and hopes of glory. Not the book of God! I am as convinced of it as that I am here a living, breathing man."[d]

18—21. (18) east sea, *i.e.* the Dead Sea. (19) Tamar, or Engedi. strife, or Meribah. De. xxii. 52. river of Egypt, *Wady-el-Arish.*[a] (20) great sea, Mediterranean. (21) so, according to this outline.

Inspiration of the whole Bible.—We say that it is the whole Scriptures that are inspired of God; the historical books as well as the prophecies; the Gospels as well as the Song of Solomon; the Gospels of Mark and Luke, as well as those of John and Matthew; the history of the shipwreck of St. Paul in the waters of the Adriatic, as well as that of the shipwreck of the old world in the waters of the flood; the scenes of Mamre beneath the tents of Abraham, as well as those of the day of Christ in the eternal tabernacles; the prophetic prayers in which the Messiah, a thousand years before His first advent, cries in the Psalms, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? they have pierced My hands and My feet, they have cast lots upon My vesture, they look and stare at Me," as well as the narratives of them given by St. John, St. Mark, St. Luke, or St. Matthew.[b]

22, 23. (22) strangers, foreigners dwelling with them as proselytes.[a] (23) sojourneth, or settles down.

Bible: self-perpetuating.—It has a self-perpetuating and multiplying power. Infidels have written books: where are they? Where is Porphyry, Julian? Fragments of them there are; but we are indebted even for this to Christian criticism. Where is Hume, Voltaire, Bolingbroke? It requires the world's reprieve to bring a copy out of the prison of their darkness. Where is the Bible? Wherever there is light. Speaking the language of heaven in seven score and three of the tongues of earth, and giving the Word of God by forty millions of voices, to five times as many million ears, and in tongues spoken by six hundred millions of men; and having swept its path of storm through all time, it still walks triumphant, despite earth's dying malice and hell's eternal wrath; and, like the apocalyptic angel, though it wraps its mantle of cloud around it, calmly looks out upon the world with a face, as it were the sun encircled with the rainbow.[b]

CHAPTER THE FORTY-EIGHTH.

1—7. (1) Dan, taking the first allotment, with border to Damascus. (2) border of Dan, *i.e.* on his south side. (3—7) These tribes are all to be on the northern side of the holy portion, which is set in the very middle of the country.

Bible and nature.—The God of nature and the Bible is one. He who inspired histories, and psalms, and prophecies, and epistles, was He who made stars and flowers, and the works of His hands never look so fair as when studied in the light of His Word. Nature is not so much a book by which we can find out God, as a book from which we may gather illustrations of what God is, having learned His perfections from His revealed truth. It is said of Archbishop Usher, when he grew old, and spectacles could not help his failing sight, that a book was dark except beneath the strongest light of the windows. And he aged man

d Dr. J. Cumming.

a Nu. xxxiv. 5.

We ought to look with deep earnestness of spirit into the Holy Scriptures — the mirror of God's word, in order to find out our faults, that they may be corrected; in order to find Christian graces therein which may be improved; in order to find the blessed doctrines of our Saviour, which we may learn to adorn in all things.

b Prof. Gaussen.

a "Foreigners never before had the privilege of purchasing or possessing any inheritance among the Jews."—*Lowth.* Le. xxv. 10; Nu. xxxvi. 7; De. xxiii. 3.

b Bp. Thomson.

"Both are good books, and both are God's books; and he only looks on this great world aright who, valuing it for something more valuable than the gold men draw from its rocky bowels, the flocks it pastures, the rich freights borne on its waves, and the harvests that wave on its fields, beholds

would sit against the casement, with his outspread volume before him, till the sunshine flitted to another opening, when he would change his place, and put himself again under the brilliant rays: and so he would move about with the light till the day was done, and his studies ended. And truly we may say our weak eyes will not suffice to make out the inscription on the page of nature, unless we hold it up in a Divine light—unless we get near the window of Scripture, where God pours in upon us the radiance of His Spirit. And wherever it shines let us follow it, knowing that nowhere but in its illumination can we study the spiritual meanings of nature so well.[a]

8–14. (8) offering, or portion devoted to God. (9) oblation, ch. xlv. 1. (10) for them, for their maintenance. (11) sons of Zadok, the lawful line of priests. charge, ward or ordinance. (12) most holy, regard as solemnly consecrated to God. (13) Levites, as previously narrated, ch. xlv. 7. (14) alienate, devoting any of it to common purposes.

Inspiration of the Bible.—The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God. It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing, saying, Thus saith the Lord, when it was their own invention. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils, for they could not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to all eternity. We therefore draw this conclusion—the Bible must be given by Divine inspiration.[a]

15–20. (15) profane, common, unsanctified: ch. xlii. 20. (16) the measures, or measurements. (17) suburbs, or outskirts.[a] (18) the increase, or produce. serve in the city, porters, etc. (19, 20) foursquare, a square fig. is the emblem of perpetuity, strength, and solidity.[b]

Parliamentary enactments as to the Scriptures.—At the request of the Romish clergy, severe proclamations were issued by king Henry VIII. against all who read, or kept by them, Tindal's translation of the New Testament; so that a copy of this book found in the possession of any person was sufficient to convict him of heresy, and subject him to the flames. "But the fervent zeal of those Christian days," says the good old martyrologist, Fox, "seemed much superior to these, our days and times, as manifestly may appear by their sitting up all night in reading or hearing; also by their expenses and charges in buying of books in English, of whom some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James, or of St. Paul, in English."[c]

21–24. (21) for the prince, ch. xlv. 7. (22) from the possession, *i.e.* measuring from.[a] (23, 24) a portion, better, one portion. Comp. Joseph's double portion.

Company of the Bible.—By opening this volume we may at any time walk in the garden of Eden with Adam; sit in the ark with Noah: share the hospitality or witness the faith of Abraham; ascend the mount of God with Moses; unite in the secret devotions of David, or listen to the eloquent and impassioned address of Paul. Nay, more, we may here converse with Him who spake as never man spake; participate, with the spirits of the just made perfect, in the employment and happiness of heaven; and

there, as in a glorious mirror, the wisdom and power of God—the goodness that shines in every sunbeam and falls in every shower."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

a J. Stoughton.

a D. Simpson.

We are not to wish our Bible to flatter us, as some persons love to be flattered by their mirror. The Bible flatters none; it shows infirmity in the strongest, deformity in the fairest, defilement in the purest Christian.

a "The city being 4,500 reeds square, leaves 250 reeds north, 250 south, for suburbs; the like are marked off on the east and west fr. the city land."—*Spk. Com.*

b Re. xxi. 16.

c R. T. S.

a "The prince's portion shall extend from the boundary of Judah, on the north of the Holy Portion, to the border of Benjamin on the south, so as to flank the Holy Portion on the E. and W., and to fill up what

lies between it and the Jordan on the E., and bet. it and the Medit. on the W."—*Wordsworth.*
b Dr. Payson.

In 1299 the bishop of Winchester borrowed a Bible, in two volumes folio, from a convent in that city, giving a bond, drawn up in a most formal and solemn manner, for its due return. This Bible had been given to the convent by a former bishop, and in consideration of this gift, and one hundred marks, the monk founded a daily mass for the soul of the donor.

a Dante.

enjoy sweet communion with the Father of our spirits through His Son Jesus Christ. Such is the society to which the Scriptures introduce us; such the examples which they present to our imitation.

25—29. **and by,** *etc.*, these tribes were located on the further or southern side of the Holy Portion. Ezekiel's arrangement is manifestly an ideal rather than a practical one.

The Bible sometimes a closed book.—

Men, thus at variance with the truth,
Dream, though their eyes be open; reckless some
Of error; others well aware they err,
To whom more guilt and shame are justly due.
Each the known track of sage philosophy
Deserts, and has a by-way of his own:
So much the restless eagerness to shine,
And love of singularity prevail.
Yet this, offensive as it is, provokes
Heaven's anger less, than when the Book of God
Is forced to yield to man's authority,
Or from its straightness warp'd: no reck'ning made,
What blood the sowing of it in the world
Has cost; what favour for himself he wins,
Who meekly clings to it.

* * * * * * *

Christ said not to His first conventicle,
Go forth and preach impostures to the world;
But gave them Truth to build on: and the sound
Was mighty on their lips; nor needed they,
Beside the Gospel, other spear or shield.
To aid them in their warfare for the faith.[a]

30—35. (30) **goings out,** or gates. Ways of entrance for the various tribes from north and south of the Holy Portion. (31) **after the names,** called after the names of the several tribes.[a] (32—34) **Joseph,** the name covers the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. (35) **the Lord is there,** Heb. *Jehovah-Shammah.*[b]

The Lord in Zion (*v.* 35).—I. What is contained in the promise? II. What are the signs of this high privilege being annexed to the Church at large, or to any individual therein? Apply:—1. If the Lord be present in Zion, with what temper of mind should we come to the house of God? with what so enmity we should remain there and return thence? 2. We should learn a lesson of charity; 3. If it is our high privilege as Christians to be made temples of the Holy Ghost, then let us say, Blessed be God, who has given us strong consolation and good hope through grace.[c]

a Re. xxi. 12.

b "Not that the city will be called so in mere name, but that the reality will be best expressed by this descriptive title."—*Fausset.*

Je. iii. 17, xxxiii. 16; Zec. ii. 10; Re. xxi. 3, xxii. 3.

c R. Cecil, M.A.

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